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BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE - NAPOLI

SIR H RAEBURN R.A. W.C.EDWARDS

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE "VITTORIO EMANUELE III"
NAPOLI

SIR HENRY RAEBURN, R.A.

PAINTER TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND

Published by John Murray Albemarle Street. 1832

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PAINTER TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND

London Published by John Murray Albemarle Street. 1832

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THE LIVES

OF

THE MOST EMINENT

BRITISH

PAINTERS, SCULPTORS,

AND

ARCHITECTS.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE "VITTORIO EMANUELE" NAPOLI

VOL. V.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

MDCCCXXXII.

Then, too, the pillar'd dome magnific heav'd
Its ample roof, and luxury within
Pour'd out her glittering stores; the canvas smooth
With glowing life protuberant to the view
Embodied rose; the statue seem'd to breathe
And soften into flesh beneath the touch
Of forming Art, imagination — flush'd. —— THOMSON.

LONDON:
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New-Street-Square.

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LIVES

OF

THE BRITISH PAINTERS.

JAMESONE.

GEORGE JAMESONE, called by Walpole the Vandyke of Scotland, a presbyterian, and, if tradition may be trusted, a poet, was the son of Andrew Jamesone, architect, and born at Aberdeen in the year 1586, on the day in which his native queen was beheaded by her implacable cousin at Fotheringay. Neither the times in which he was born, nor the religion in which he had been educated, were favourable to elegant tastes, yet a strong love of art came upon him; though at what age, or in what manner, no one has related. That it came early, we may conjecture from the proficiency which he attained; and that the stimulus proceeded from the profession of his father, then more closely connected with the sister arts than now, can hardly be doubted, since we find no trace of any contemporary school or professor of art in his native place. But yesterday a reformation in

religion, above all others fierce and desolating, had cast the magnificent abbeys and monasteries of Scotland to the ground, and destroyed their images and paintings, as things idolatrous: good examples in any of the fine arts must therefore have been scarce, and the aspiring student must have found himself surrounded with difficulties such as true genius alone could surmount. Amidst all the facilities which modern galleries and academies afford, the progress of the most gifted is slow and painful — what must have been his case who had few examples and no instructors?

However he came by it, Jamesone acquired such skill in painting as attracted the notice of his countrymen: he was advised to seek abroad what he could not find at home; and had the good sense or the good fortune to establish himself in the studio of Rubens, with whom he remained for several years in the company of Vandyke. We know that in the year 1619 Vandyke left his great master and went into Italy; and the inscription on a picture by Jamesone informs us, that in 1623 he was a husband and a father, and pursuing his profession in Scotland. It is, therefore, probable that the latter was some thirty years old before he visited the Netherlands — a ripe age; yet students of threescore years and more are not unknown to academies. I have seen William Blake, within a few years of his death, studying at Somerset House with all the ardour of youth; and other names not less distinguished might be cited.

Many may be inclined to wonder that any such

being as a painter should have existed in Scotland during the stormy days of the Covenant, much more that he should have flourished, become famous, and acquired a fortune; but the truth is, that the fierce discipline of Knox was soon softened, and that in matters of taste and elegance the presbyterians of the North were by no means so furious and uncompromising as the puritans and independents of the South. Even during the half century that followed the first dawn of the Scottish reformation, plays were allowed to be enacted, and none of the flock were forbidden to attend such exhibitions, save elders and deacons. In short, the sour austerity so much satirised by poets and ridiculed by historians did not descend in full force till the period of the great civil war. The love of poetry, and painting, and architecture, spread from King James amongst his nobles north and south; and his two gifted sons formed collections, and patronised genius, with all the liberality which a turbulent and economical House of Commons would allow. Jamesone, when he returned from foreign study, found painting a not unhonoured profession among the northern presbyterians, and was employed to execute many portraits of distinguished covenanters as well as cavaliers.

It has been said, sarcastically, that in this, nationality overcame the aversion to a profane art, and that the natural love of all men for what is strange and first seen was too strong for the discipline of the kirk; but foreign artists had formerly been employed to do what a native was able to perform now; and those who have ac-

quainted themselves with the antiquities of the North need not be told that works of art, rivalling at least those with which catholic architecture had adorned itself in England, were largely diffused over Scotland, both main land and isle. The church of Rome, the mother of much that is useful and elegant, had from early ages captivated the people by her carved processions of saints and her painted miracles and legends. The kings, too, had not only patronised works of genius, but some of them excelled personally in poetry, music, and architecture; tapestry, representing passages from Scripture or from the poets, abounded; sculptured tombs in freestone or in marble were to be found in every church; and even the wildest of the Western Isles show, in the present day, such relics of old magnificence as excite the admiration of travellers. That the sculptures of the most splendid abbeys, and the paintings in the castles of the nobles, were altogether unworthy of being classed among finished works of art no one questions: yet, at the same time, the conception often showed true poetic feeling; and we cannot deny that, in selecting the subjects from Scripture, Scottish history, and poetry, the men of that day showed a taste which might be a lesson in the present. Some have seen—and I think there is truth in the remark—more of those formal shapes and attitudes, than of the fine freedom and natural ease of Rubens, in the works of Jamesone. It is seldom that a style acquired by much study and hard labour, as his must have been in the absence of all instruction, can be relinquished even when a

better offers itself: the old man with his deeds is too hard for regeneration; and neither hand nor mind willingly undertake a new task. He learned the light and shade of colours in the company of Vandyke; but it is more than probable that he grounded his style upon the older and ruder models of his own country.

Of the elder artists of Scotland, and their works, little has been either said or written. A few names, and dates, and references, have been preserved in the Royal Book of Accounts; imperfect as such memorandums are, they are interesting. To these we shall add such information as the casual mention of historians, allusions of poets, and tradition, have supplied. The first name on the royal record is evidently a native one — it is that of John de Linlithgow, who, in the year 1329, sculptured the tomb of the great Robert Bruce; the second is that of "Andrew the painter," who made a monument in memory of David Bruce and his queen. Artists in those days were both sculptors and painters; and it was the fashion to paint, and gild, and inlay with precious metal and with precious stones the recumbent statues of our sepulchral monuments. Nor were the labours of those men confined to the church. The great hall in the castle of the renowned Randolph Earl of Murray was a work of no common magnificence, and must have cost much money and time. It was eighty-nine feet long, thirty-five feet wide, and thirty feet high, roofed with massive beams of carved oak, and ornamented with sculptures. The oaken dining-table and chair of the warrior

are still preserved: the former stands on six pillars, curiously bordered and inlaid; and the latter, in shape and fashion, not unlike the old coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, is emblazoned with carvings of his family arms and emblems of his station as regent.

Paintings in fresco, and even in oil, existed in Scotland centuries before the appearance of Jamesone. They were chiefly Scripture pieces or portraits of distinguished men; and of the latter there was one with which he must have been early acquainted. I allude to that likeness in fresco, of William the Lyon, supposed to have belonged to the monastery of the Trinity Friars of Aberdeen, of which that king was the founder. It is now in the Trinity Hall of that city; measures four feet high by two feet nine inches wide, and bears the following inscription, — of course of a later age than the picture: — "St. William, King of Scots, surnamed the Lyon, the first founder of the Trinitie Friars at Aberdeen, where he had his chappell, the chief place of retirement for his devotions. He reigned 49 years, beginning 1165, dyed at Sriveling 1214, and was buried at Aberbrothwick." In the parish church of Houston, Renfrewshire, are still preserved the effigies or portraits of Sir John Houston and his lady; they seem to be in oil — I say seem, because they are so much decayed as to be almost illegible; they belong to a series of monuments commemorating the house of Houston. The knight is in complete armour; his lady, Mary Colquhoun, is in the dress of the time, 1400: they closely resemble the works of

the same period still preserved in England. The portrait of Cardinal Innes, in the collection of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, is believed to be the work of foreign hands. He is represented in the act of composing: books occupy the back ground; and an inscription says he is a native of Scotland, flourished in the year 1412, and wrote these volumes. Pinkerton assigns to the year 1430 the following story, in which barbarous deeds mingle with art perhaps equally barbarous: —A Highland robber having stolen a poor woman's cow, she vowed to wear no shoes till she told the king. On this the savage seized her, and, in ridicule of her vow, nailed horse-shoes on her feet. On recovering, she went to the palace, told her story, and showed the scars on her feet. The monarch caused the savage to be secured and tried. On conviction, he was clothed in a canvass frock on which was painted a man fixing horse-shoes on a woman's feet, exhibited two days in the streets of Perth, and then dragged at a horse's tail to the gallows, and hanged.

James the First of Scotland, a poet of no common genius, and a musician of some skill, was also a painter of miniatures, and an illuminator of books. None of the works of this royal pencil have reached us; but he who could write with such good feeling could no doubt imagine works of art worthy of living. Illuminated manuscripts and miniatures are perishable matters; and, not to speak of time and bad keeping, the fire of the reformers found its way so effectually among libraries, that few works of that period remain: —one only, Fordun's Scotichronicon, containing

only some four or five illuminations, is preserved among Bishop Parker's books in the library of Christ's College, Cambridge. Heraldic painting, a sort of hieroglyphic history of families, was long popular. On the execution of Murdoc Duke of Albany, and his sons, in the year 1425, they were buried on the south side of the altar, in the Black Friars' Church at Stirling, and over them were placed paintings of their persons and their coats armorial. In the reign of the saints in 1643, this sort of harmless emblazonment, which had survived Knox and all his fierce companions, was declared infamous. The General Assembly of the Kirk perceived something of Baal and Ashtaroth in the armorial bearings suspended in places of worship when persons of note or family died, and passed a prohibitory act "against burials and hanging of pensils and brods, and offering of honours and arms, and such like scandalous monuments, in the kirk." Having destroyed their splendid abbeys, they possessed, no doubt, in those days few kirks worthy of hanging either pensils, or honours, or arms in.

The reign of James the Third was inglorious in arms, and had a tragic ending; nevertheless he was a prince skilful in architecture, and an encourager of men of taste and talent. He built the great hall of Stirling Castle, with the splendid chapel: the former was adorned with much fine carving, and the latter contained that singular altar-piece thus described by Pinkerton:—"This celebrated picture, in the form of a folding altar-piece, is painted on both sides, and divided into

four compartments. The first represents the king kneeling; behind him is his son, a youth about twelve years of age, which ascertains the date (1482), with St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. The royal crown is not arched, nor was, apparently, till the reign of James the Fifth, when new regalia were ordered; but it has high fleurons of great richness: the robe is of a lilac hue, furred with ermine; the vest, cloth of gold. In the second compartment, the queen appears, also kneeling, in a kirtle of cloth of gold and blue robe; her head-dress one blaze of gold and jewels; the arms, depicted with exact heraldry, indicate the daughter of Denmark; and behind her is a personage in plate armour, apparently her father, in the character of St. Canute, the patron of his kingdom. Of the two compartments on the reverse of this grand piece, one represents the Trinity. In the other an ecclesiastic kneels; but his heraldry of three buckles and a chevron can hardly be traced, except to the obscure * family of Bonkil in the Merse. Behind is a kind of organ with two angels, not of ideal beauty, and perhaps portraits of the king's two sisters, Mary Lady Hamilton, and Margaret, then unmarried — a conjecture supported by the uncommon ornament of a coronet on the head of one of the angels. Hardly can any kingdom in Europe boast of a more noble family picture of this early epoch; and it is in itself a convincing specimen of the attention of

* Pinkerton must have had some odd fancy in his head when he called this family *obscure*. It was closely connected with the two great houses of Douglas and Stewart.

James the Third to the fine arts." This royal altar-piece hung till lately (perhaps it still hangs) in Kensington Palace; and, amid all the vicissitudes of fortune which it had undergone, looked perfect and even beautiful, surrounded as it was by the works of Holbein and Vandyke. Of the hand that painted this earliest of the authentic portraits of the Scottish kings, the treasurer's books contain no account, neither has tradition preserved any memory. The royal memorandums of that reign have been, indeed, almost all destroyed.

The chivalrous and unhappy James the Fourth was a warm admirer of poetry, painting, and sculpture: his queen, too, joined with him in this; and went so far as to permit poetical incense of a very questionable purity to be offered to her by the bards. Dunbar, a genius of a high order, repeatedly alludes to the sister arts: in one of his dreams, he employs a painter to ornament his humble abode: —

> This hinder night, half sleeping as I lay,
> Methought my chamber in a new array
> Was all depaynt with many divers hue
> Of all the noble stories old and new
> Sen our first father formed was of clay.

And in another of his poems he thus commemorates the professions which flourished under his royal master: —

> Cunyouris, Carvouris, and Carpentaris,
> Beilders of barkis and ballingaris,
> Masounis bygand upon the land,
> And Schip-wrichtis hewand upon the strand,

Glasing-wrichtis, Goldsmythis, and Lapedaris, Pryntouris, Payntouris, and Potingaris.

The account-books fortunately preserved of James's short reign show the munificence of his spirit. He largely encouraged foreign artists; yet Scotsmen were not wanting; — as the names of John Pratt, Sir Thomas Galbraith (a churchman most probably), Andrew Laing, and Alexander Chalmers, all mentioned as employed in decorating the palaces of Stirling and Falkland, sufficiently attest. There must, no doubt, have been many portraits of this munificent prince; but the only one in oil that now is known to exist, is that in Sir Walter Scott's dining-room at Abbotsford, bearing the date of 1507. It is a piece not unworthy of the hand of Holbein — exhibiting a pale melancholy countenance, stamped not less visibly than Vandyke's portraits of Charles I. with the lines of a dark fate. From the date, it may have been done in France during the king's travels.

James the Fifth inherited all the abilities and taste of his father, with the addition of a genius in poetry of no common order. He was fond of the fine arts; but his magnificent spirit suited ill with the poverty of the North, and with the turbulence of his nobles. His palace at Stirling was long one of the wonders of Scotland, more particularly for the carved roof of the presence chamber, which was of Scottish oak, divided into pannels, and ornamented with some forty and odd heads of most delicate carving, representing, it is believed, the portraits of the king and his chief nobles. The workmanship of these

was imputed to foreign artists: but Lord Strathallan's History of the House of Drummond, together with the treasurer's books, prove that they were the work of John Drummond of Auchterarder, master of works to James the Fifth, assisted, it is believed, by "Andro Wood, Carvour," one of the court workmen. This splendid roof was destroyed in the year 1777, when Stirling Castle was converted into barracks — in fact, it was thrown into the streets as rubbish: but some citizens, in whom the true spirit of their country still lingered, gathered the heads together; and as many were preserved as formed an interesting volume called "Lacunar Strevelinense," in which etchings were given of the chief relics. In like manner the palace of Falkland was adorned with carved heads surrounded with rich foliages; they are cut in stone, and may be still seen in the inner court: time has injured them sorely, but they preserve the air of individual portraits.

The personal and romantic adventures of James, and the dissensions which unhappily arose between him and his nobility, did not hinder him from bestowing attention on painting and poetry. A remarkable picture, containing portraits of himself and his queen, Mary of Guise, is now in the worthy keeping of the Duke of Devonshire. The figures are less than life, the colours much faded: they are not a little stiff; but there is a look of nature about both. At the top are the arms of Scotland; at the bottom, the conjugal arms of the houses of Stuart and Guise, with inscriptions recording that she was then twenty-

four years old, and the king twenty-eight. The hair of both inclines more to red than to auburn; Mary has a red and white carnation in her hand; James holds a jewel with St. Andrew, and on his bonnet is a gold medal minutely finished.

The melancholy reign of Mary Stuart has few names of artists either native or foreign; yet paintings abounded in her day: a list of those of her own and preceding reigns would occupy a large space; even portraits of herself are so numerous as to deserve a long dissertation. Of these latter it may be right to remark, that none of them give us an image of surpassing comeliness, and not one of them can be proved to have been copied from the life. In the collection of Charles the First was a small whole length, stated in the catalogue to have been brought from Scotland: this was probably painted from the life, as were also those which belonged to the kings of France; for it is known that she sat in Paris to the court painters, Janet and Pourbus the elder. The far greater part of her reign was occupied with matters of a nature too stern for the pencil of the portrait painter to make records of court beauties and handsome cavaliers: infatuated by her own affections; bewildered and browbeat by contending factions in religion; insulted, persecuted, and driven into exile and imprisonment by the ferocity of her nobles and the perfidy of her own brother; and finally led to an unmerited death by a cousin and a queen; Mary had little leisure to display the endowments of her race, or call elegance and art into existence. Arts, indeed, may be said to have perished in her reign.

The reformers preached a rigorous crusade against all images in stone or on canvass; and, in the purification of the cathedrals, destroyed all that claimed aught in common with the human figure. Statues of princes, nobles, warriors, saints working miracles, and legends of the church; Christ judging the world at the last day; and Satan playing on the bagpipe to a dance of devils; all were alike condemned, cast out, and destroyed. In one little isle of the west, one hundred and sixty stone crosses, most of them beautifully embellished, were in one day tossed ignominiously into the sea. The rage against statues was especially severe: they were considered as near of kin to the clay images used in witchcraft; and learned men hesitated not to pronounce them so many wicked spells by which the Scarlet Witch of the Seven Hills had subjected men's souls.

Though "Ruin, with her sweeping besom," had marched thus fierce and triumphant over Scottish art, no sooner was the kirk settled, and the public mind in repose, than painting — one branch at least — held up its head. A love of portraiture seems part of British nature. James the Second continued his sitting to Kneller though he heard that the Prince of Orange had landed; even during the storming of the cathedrals, and the fierce sermons of Knox, artists had sittings from the Lords of the Congregation. A family-piece of the Setons of Winton has been ascribed to Sir Antonio More, and also to Zucchero: it is thus described by Sir Walter Scott: — "After the battle of Langside,

Lord Seton was obliged to retire abroad for safety, and was an exile for two years, during which he was reduced to the necessity of driving a waggon in Flanders for his subsistence. He rose to favour in James the Sixth's reign; and, resuming his paternal property, had himself painted in his waggoner's dress, and in the act of driving a wain with four horses, on the north end of a stately gallery at Seton Castle. He appears to have been fond of the arts, for there exists a beautiful family-piece of him in the centre of his family. The original is the property of Lord Somerville, nearly connected with the Seton family, and is at present at his Lordship's fishing villa of the Pavilion, near Melrose."—"This was so valuable a painting," says an elder authority, "that when Charles the First came to Scotland, in 1633, being at Seton House, his Majesty, during the time of dinner, had his eyes constantly fixed on that picture; which the Earl of Winton observing, offered it in a present to the King; but he declined accepting it, saying, that he would never rob the family of so inestimable a jewel."

James the Sixth extended encouragement to art as far as his extreme poverty and the parsimony of his parliaments would allow. Painting began to extend from portraiture to history, and sculpture also re-appeared. The unfortunate Ruthven Earl of Gowrie, according to Hume of Godscroft, built a fair gallery, and "decorated it with pictures;" and in the great gallery of the old palace of Scone, begun by the same earl, were various paintings in water-colours. "The roof of the gallery," says one of our ablest antiquaries,

"was of wood, in the shape of the lid of an old-fashioned bandbox; the ground white; the groups of figures were in ovals, with a border like the frame of a picture. In every one that I remember, was King James, the principal figure, on horseback, surrounded by his courtiers, mounted also; he had always his high-crowned hat and yellow beard, and his face much larger than those of his attendants. I remember no ovals on any other subject but that of the King's sports. The roof around these representations was daubed over with heads and harpies, &c., the whole very ill done, and much spoilt when I saw the house." Nor among these royal residences is the house of Ravelstone, built by George Fowlis in 1603, unworthy of being mentioned. On the ceiling of the principal apartment were painted the amusements and occupations of men in the twelve months of the year, each distinguished by the corresponding sign of the zodiac. The centre was occupied by a group of angels, drawn up in a circle, and performing a concert of vocal and instrumental music: one of the youngest, as in duty bound, playing on the bagpipe. A tragic story, connected with painting, is related in Pitcairn's Criminal Trials:—One Archibald Cornwall, a town-officer of Edinburgh, having seized some furniture for debt, carried it to the market-cross to be disposed of. Among the articles were portraits of James the Sixth and his Queen. These royal heads, it seems, the unfortunate man, thoughtlessly perhaps, proposed to hang on the public gibbet, and fixed a nail for the purpose; when the people, aware of

the danger, or resenting the disgrace, interposed and prevented further exposure. The King, who would have forgiven an insult to his person, but not to his picture, was deeply incensed. Cornwall was tried, convicted, and executed, within the brief space of twenty-four hours; and the Town Council, returning from the execution, made it a law, "that nane of their Majesties or Graces pictures or portraits be poyndet, rouppet, or compryset for any manner of cause."

Art, such as it was, had done its part to honour King James; and when his Queen arrived from Denmark, the 19th of May, 1590, all the classic lore and skill in public pageantry seem to have been called into active service. Among other matters the contemporary rhymes of Birrell, an honest burgher of the place, dwell at great length on the historic tapestries and "images and antics auld," which were every where displayed on "the stairs and houses of the town." The principal pageant seems to have been made up of much the same material that some twenty years afterwards formed the staple commodity of the court masks of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones:—

It written was with stories mae,
How Venus with a thundering thud,
Inclosed Achates and Enae,
Within a meekel mistic clud;
And how fair Anna's wondrous wraith
Deplors her sister Dido's daith.

Io with goldin glittering hair
Was portret wondrous properlie,
And Polipheme was pentit thair,
Quha in his forehead had ane ee.

Beneath him but ane little space
Was Janus with the double face, &c. &c.

The more to enhance the merits of the exhibition,—

—— At her entrie at the ports,
Trim harangs till her Grace was maid;
Her salutation thair was sung
In ornate style of the Latine tung.

English readers will, it is hoped, pardon this retrospective view of matters, which must possess considerable interest for all Scottish ones. To conclude, the British Solomon, in 1603, carried his notions of royal right, and his taste for poetry, painting, and pageantry, into England; and art in Scotland, left without encouragement, suffered an eclipse till the return of Jamesone from the school of Rubens.

He set up his easel in his native city, in the year 1620, in the thirty-fourth year of his age; and the first-fruits of his study were landscape and history. It was, we may suppose, his desire to found a school in which works akin to poetry, and owing their excellence more to the imagination than to reality, should take the lead; and for a while he seems to have persisted in this unprofitable dream. Like others in latter days, he could only be taught by the cold touch of experience, that painting, dismissed as an auxiliary from the church, is, in Britain at least, considered only as a more genteel method of embalming and preserving the shapes and looks of the high born and the wealthy; or, as a humble handmaid of architecture, to embellish her coved ceilings and her naked walls. As an art capable

of exciting a pleasure all its own, few then regarded it; and fewer still thought of laying out their money on detached poetic pictures of dead or living nature. The leading people of the time were, however, attracted to Jamesone's studio, by the beauty of his drawing and the transparent splendour of his colouring; and he was gradually induced, after the usual fashion of those who do not wish their days to pass without profit, to forsake the fields of fancy for those of living life. No doubt, then, we must assign to the first years after his return his paintings of the Sybils, still preserved in the North; which owe, tradition avers, some part of their fascination to the good looks of a lady of Aberdeen; several landscapes, of which no other account can be rendered, than that they were small, and remarkable for the clearness of their colours and the accuracy of their perspective; his Book of Scripture Sketches, "containing," according to the words of his will, "two hundred leaves of parchment of excellent write adorned with divers historys of our Saviour curiously limned," valued at two hundred pounds, — and a picture of Medea, of which I can find no particular account any where. With this we may close our account of Jamesone's historic attempts, unless we admit into the number that singular piece of his at Cullen House, allegorically expressive of the fortunes of Charles the First; and which may be considered as a successful prediction, since the painter died before the prince. This work, which is three feet eight inches high, and two feet eight inches

broad, shows the British crown overturned, with the sceptre, and other symbols of kingly power, scattered confusedly around; while Charles himself, indifferently drawn, seems to be contemplating the disorder of his regalia.

Soon after Jamesone's return to Scotland, he married Isabel Tosh, a lady of his native city, who (besides several sons, who all died in their youth,) bore him one daughter, who lived to be thrice married, and to be the mother of three different families, in whose descendants the painter survives to this day. One of his earliest works is a portrait of his wife, his infant son, and himself, painted in 1623. The former has roses in her hands and a tartan scarf thrown gracefully over her head, displaying a fine person, with a cap of pointed lace, and a lace tippet rising close to her chin: the painter holds his pallet and brushes in his hand, and looks over his wife's shoulder; his eyes are very dark, his brow broad, and he wears moustaches, and the tuft of beard on the chin, like the cavaliers of that period.* His fame soon spread beyond Aberdeen; and he was induced to transfer his residence to Edinburgh, where the delicacy and softness of his touch, and his broad clear style of colouring, gained him

* In the collection of Lord Alva there is a portrait by Jamesone of Prince Henry, which, if copied from life, must have been painted long before this portrait of his family. The Prince died in 1612, before Jamesone studied abroad; and as the picture is not suspected to be a copy from another work, it is not improbable that Henry, who was a lover of art and a collector, may have sat to his countryman.

general admiration, and, it would appear, constant employment. But for Rubens and Vandyke, who then filled the eye of London, he would probably have gone at once to the seat of the court. But however this might have been, at Edinburgh he halted, content to be the first in his own land.

" When King Charles visited Scotland in 1633," says Walpole, " the magistrates of Edinburgh, knowing his Majesty's taste, employed Jamesone to make drawings of the Scottish monarchs, with which the King was so much pleased, that, enquiring for the painter, he sat to him, and rewarded him with a diamond ring from his own finger." I know not where Walpole found this anecdote; but part of it is confirmed by northern testimony: — " The magistrates of Edinburgh," says Mr. George Chalmers, " desirous to pay a compliment to the King's taste in painting, begged of Jamesone to allow them the use of as many of the portraits done by him as could be gathered together. These were hung up on each side of the Netherbow Port, through which the royal cavalcade was to pass. This exhibition so attracted the King's attention, that he stopped his horse for a considerable time, and expressed his admiration of the good painting, and remarked the likeness to some of those they were done for. This was a lucky circumstance for Jamesone, for the King, while at Edinburgh, sat for a full length picture; and having heard that Jamesone had been accustomed to wear his hat while at work, by reason of a complaint in his head, his Majesty very humanely ordered

him to be covered; which privilege he ever thereafter thought himself entitled to in whatever company he was." To reconcile these two accounts we must have recourse to tradition, which avers that Jamesone, to render the pageant prepared for the King's entrance more attractive, introduced the real and imaginary line of Scottish monarchs from Fergus the First welcoming Charles to the throne of his ancestors. These rude and hasty works, having fulfilled their purpose, were probably thrown aside with the other lumber of the pageant. The notice of a king, and such a judge too as Charles, must have been favourable to the fortunes of the painter; it is even said to have given new vigour and purity to his style: "his best works," says one of his biographers, "were from thence to his death." Having obtained the sanction of the chief authority at that time in art, he wrought with confidence, — and the confidence of genius inspired his drawing, and gave a freer glow to his colouring.

Though the town of Aberdeen offended him not a little, by offering for his portrait of Charles a price so unworthy that he made haste to dispose of it to a stranger, his country on the whole was not illiberal; nay, in Aberdeen itself, though the corporation acted so penuriously to Jamesone, he had always kind friends; and heads of various of his fellow-citizens yet remembered for their worth and talents appear in the list of his portraits. Of these, the most distinguished are, Dr. Dun, founder of the grammar school — Andrew Cant—Sir Paul Menzies, Provost—Patrick Forbes,

Bishop of Aberdeen — Professor Sandilands of King's College — Alexander Bannerman of Elsick — and David Anderson, merchant and burgess, who, from his eminent skill in mechanics, was commonly called "Davie-do-a'-things." This latter personage was Jamesone's uncle; and though he had three daughters, his widow was rich enough and generous enough to found and endow an hospital for the maintenance and education of ten poor orphans. Most of these portraits are in the University of Aberdeen, others in the city, — where the name of Jamesone is held in reverence from the twofold consideration of his professional eminence and the great respectability of his numerous descendants.

The ancient house of Marr afforded a liberal patronage to the painter: a round dozen of the Erskine name, and more, are enumerated in the Alva collection, besides those in other houses of the nobility allied to the old stock. Civil war, the sword, and forfeitures, crushed in one fatal year the noble house of Marr, and dispersed these and other fine pictures: they passed chiefly into the possession of the late Lord Alva and the Earl of Buchan.

Most of the noble families of Scotland have works from his hand; but the greatest collection of them is at Taymouth, in former days called Balloch, the seat of the Earl of Breadalbane. These were painted for Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy, a favourite with James the Sixth, and not less so with Anne of Denmark, who, after her succession to the English throne, repeatedly invited the northern knight to her court; and sent

him, as a token of her innocent esteem, a gold ring set with diamonds, and ornamented with a pair of doves exquisitely wrought. With this accomplished cavalier, Jamesone, it is said, travelled abroad; no time, however, is mentioned, and no country named. It was probably before his return from the school of Rubens: men seldom travel for knowledge in their old age; and if Sir Colin Campbell had become a favourite with the Queen before her accession to the English throne, he must have been advanced in life when the painter, in 1635, began his great labours at Taymouth. He commenced with a genealogical picture—a family tree, on whose wide spreading branches the chiefs of the house of Campbell are hanging in miniature as numerous as fruit *;—and proceeded to execute, in the size of life, a series of portraits, which few great houses in the island can match; and which has preserved to us

* A vellum manuscript, containing the genealogy of the house of Glenorchy, furnishes various memoranda respecting the works of the painter: for example—

"Item—the said Sir Coline Campbell, 8th laird of Glenorchy, gave unto George Jameson painter in Edinburgh, for King Robert and King David Bruyses, kings of Scotland, and Charles 1st, King of Great Brittane, France, and Ireland, and his Majesty's queen, and for nine more of the queens of Scotland, their portraits, quhilk are set up in the hall of Balloch, the sum of two hundreth threescore pounds.

"Mair, the said Sir Coline gave to the said George Jamesone, for the knight of Lochowe's lady, and the first countess of Argyle, and six of the ladys of Glenorchy their portraits, and the said Sir Coline his own portrait, quhilk are set up in the Chalmer of Deass of Balloch, ane hundreth fourscore pounds," &c.

the looks and lineaments of many whose names belong to history: — *e. g.* Sir Duncan Campbell —William Earl of Airth—John Duke of Rothes — James Marquis of Hamilton—Archibald Lord Napier — William Earl Marischal — The Earl of Loudon, Chancellor — John Earl of Marr, &c. All these portraits are in tolerable preservation; and when the colours were fresh, and men surveyed them who had not been rendered too fastidious by the grand dashing freedom of posture and magical colouring of Vandykes and Reynoldses, it is no wonder their fame was great. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that they are deficient in that fine flexibility of outline, and also in that deep splendour of colouring, which distinguish the best works of art; and were it not settled to a certainty that he studied under Rubens, I confess I should have set it down that he had taken Hans Holbein, or some of the old religious limners, for his models. He painted in a way so slight and so thin, that few of his pictures have been able to resist the terrible purification of sand, soap, and hard brushes, which family portraits used in former times to receive periodically from the hard hands of the northern housemaids. It appears from the memorandum book of Taymouth that Jamesone had in fact only thirty-three shillings and four-pence per portrait: the prices, however, being entered in the currency of Scotland, sound large to those who happen to have forgot that, though one Scotch pint is equal to four pints English, *a pund Scots* was but twenty-pence sterling!

The civil wars, which followed the ill-advised

interference of Charles with the discipline of the kirk must have been most unfavourable to the painter's pursuits; nevertheless, the pictures which he painted of public men, even while the armies were mustering and the sword half drawn, are numerous; and among them we find not a few of the leading spirits of the times: — as, for instance, James Grahame, the great Marquis of Montrose — his conqueror old David Leslie, the first Earl of Leven — Sir Adam Gordon — Crichton Viscount Frendraught — Sir Thomas Hope, Lord Advocate, founder of the noble house of Hopetown — the Earl of Tweedale — Sir Alexander Frazer — William Forbes, Bishop of Edinburgh — Sir Thomas Nicholson, Lord Advocate — the Earl of Huntly. Many characters of inferior importance may be added; some of whom lived in earlier and less turbulent times, and others witnessed the long and unbrotherly struggle of those heavy days: —George Heriot, the worthy goldsmith — Dr. Arthur Johnston, the poet — two Earls of Argyle — various portraits of the Carnegies, the Torphichens, the Gordons, the Lyons of Strathmore, the Urquharts, the Forbeses, and the Sutherlands. There are also a full length portrait of James the Sixth, which some judges suppose to have been painted from the life, and two of Charles the First and his queen, of whose originality there is hardly a doubt. These pictures are now scattered widely through Scotland, and are generally in the keeping of persons who appreciate their value.

Jamesone occasionally painted family pieces, — a kind of composition which seems rarely to catch

public attention, but which, nevertheless, in skilful hands, is capable of raising the character of mere portraiture into something approaching the historic. "Mr. Baird of Auchmeddan, in Aberdeenshire," says Walpole, "has in one piece three young ladies, cousins of the houses of Argyle, Errol, and Kinnoul; their ages six, seven, and eight, as marked on the side of the picture. At Mr. Lindsay's, of Wormistown in Fife, is a double half-length of two boys of that family, playing with a dog; their ages five and three, 1636." A picture containing three young girls of the Haddington family is in the possession of Sir John Dalrymple. One of the most remarkable of Jamesone's works is that likeness of himself in Cullen House,—a quarter length, as large as the life, with the hat on, according to his usual fashion. It is thus described in a letter to Sir John Sinclair:—"The picture has a large foreground, divided into squares of about six inches, of which there are ten; and in each, the figure of a man or woman, some of them full lengths, others half lengths, and some of them quarter lengths. The painter is looking you in the face, and with his left hand on a table, his right hand over it, with the forefinger of which he is pointing to three small figures, which are said to represent the best of his paintings. He is drawn in a black jacket, with the neck of his shirt, or a white band, turned over the collar of it; he has his pallet in his left hand, which rests on the table. The picture within the frame is two feet eight inches high. I am much afraid this description will convey a very

imperfect idea of so fine a painting." Neither Walpole nor Pennant — the first an anxious enquirer, and the latter a visiter at Cullen House, and incessant in his search after works of art — make mention of this singular picture, nor do they allude to the painting of Charles and his disordered regalia. *

Jamesone had probably too much sense to meddle in the angry politics of his time; and he seems to have been befriended equally by both sides: the covenanting Lesleys and Campbells were his frequent visiters; while the royalist Montrose, and a vast body of his companions, not to mention the unfortunate monarch himself, were his friends and patrons. The pencil he held was, no doubt, a potent charm to keep peace about his dwelling: to sit to the great portrait-painter of the day is a temptation which many

* Of the taste of those two eminent antiquaries, one of their sarcastic brethren thus writes: — "In Scotland there are two portraits by Vandyke, the most beautiful of his performances that I ever saw, and I have seen all the best in England. One is of the Marquis of Huntly, beheaded by the Covenanters, at Drummond Castle — *perfect*; only the back ground was retouched by Martin in my remembrance; the other is of Lord Warwick, at Taymouth — *perfection* too; but the hands are gloved, which renders it inferior to the other. Pennant was such a goose, that hearing of an excellent Vandyke at Taymouth, he mistook Lord Holland's portrait for that of his brother, and wrote a high-flown eulogium on a bad copy. This reminds me of Lord Orford; he mentions somewhere two excellent portraits by Holbein, in the Chapter House of Christ's Church, Oxford; they were my intimates for many years, — and such daubs! This slip, and the villanous designs he collected for his historical work, convince me that he knew little of painting."

ridicule, but few resist. Jamesone was, in short, caressed by the powerful, and lauded by the poets of his time (Arthur Johnston especially), much in the usual fashion of his successful brethren before and since.

General favourite as he was, he appears to have in some degree relinquished the pencil after the commencement of the great civil war, and to have lived quietly in the bosom of his family until 1644, when he died at Edinburgh in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and was buried in the churchyard of the Gray Friars' Kirk. It was little the fashion of those fanatical years to erect monuments in memory of mere men, whether eminent or otherwise; his grave was, therefore, left undistinguished. A Latin elegy, composed on his death, by David Wedderburne, was, however, printed and circulated; and it extols his private virtues quite as warmly as his professional eminence.

"By his will," says Walpole, "written with his own hand, in July, 1641, and breathing a spirit of much piety and benevolence, he provides kindly for his wife and children, and leaves many legacies to his relations and friends; particularly, to Lord Rothes, the King's picture, from head to foot, and Mary with Martha in one piece. To William Murray he gives the medals in his coffer, and bestows liberally on the poor. That he should be in a condition to do all this seems extraordinary, his prices having been so moderate: for, enumerating the debts due to him, he charges Lady Haddington for a whole length of her husband, and Lady Seton's

of the same dimensions, frames and all, but three hundred marks; and Lord Maxwell, for his own picture and his lady's, to their knees, one hundred marks; both sums of Scots money." The prices which Jamesone received for his works were, indeed, low; but we are not certain that he amassed all the fortune which he so benevolently disposed of, by labouring at the easel: his connections were numerous, respectable, and rich: in his youth, he bore the expense of foreign travel, and foreign study, and he likewise endeavoured to establish himself in the unprofitable line of history, before he was forced into portraiture by the public taste.

Of the personal manners of Jamesone, we have very scanty information. He has been called vain, because he often painted his own portrait, and ever with his hat on: but it should be remembered, that this wearing of the hat was the practice of his great master, Rubens; and that when his portrait was commissioned by a customer, it became a duty to paint it. It was also, perhaps, in imitation of Rubens, that he usually introduced the portrait of his wife with that of his son and himself: Isabel Tosh was a comely woman, and the artist no doubt was vain of her good looks. His disposition appears to have been amiable: he painted many portraits for fame or for friendship alone, and bequeathed some of his most valuable works to the noblemen who had patronised him; thus at once repaying them for their kindness, and securing for his productions galleries worthy of their merit. He is

always spoken of as a good presbyterian; but he left a natural daughter behind him; and in his last will, notwithstanding the feeling of the times, he seems to have made no distinction between her and his lawful daughter. This latter lady, Mary Jamesone, married, first, Mr. Burnet of Aldricke, in the county of Aberdeen; secondly, James Gregory, an eminent mathematician, and ancestor of the Gregorys of Edinburgh, so distinguished in the history of medicine and of literature; thirdly, George Eddie, citizen and bailie, Aberdeen; and in all of these alliances she had children. She inherited no small portion of her father's genius in art, and dedicated it to devout purposes. She wrought several Scripture pieces in tapestry, and hung them in the High Church of Aberdeen. One of her descendants, John Alexander, obtained some reputation in art: he was educated in Italy; returned to Scotland in 1720; painted several historical pictures at Castle Gordon, and delighted to copy or invent portraits of Mary Queen of Scots. Many families in the North, distinguished for talent and respectability, still take pride in tracing their lineage to Jamesone.

In his hours of study, or his modes of labour, who shall instruct us? He painted commonly on a grey canvass; his full length portraits were usually a slight degree less than the life: his earliest works are sometimes on board, and sometimes on cloth smoothly primed with a proper tone to help the harmony of his shadows. "He was one of the most esteemed," says Walpole, "of Rubens' scholars; and painted in the broad, thin, trans-

parent manner. His excellence consists in delicacy and softness, with a clear and beautiful colouring; his shades not charged, but helped by varnish, with little appearance of the pencil. He had much of Vandyke's second manner; and to Sir Antony some of his works have been occasionally imputed." This is high praise; but when we consider the state of British art in his day, and especially the unskilfulness of the native professors, it can scarcely be considered as extravagant. To depart at once from the formal corpse-like system of making figures, and assert the grace of form and the colouring of nature, required boldness as well as genius; and there can be no question that Jamesone did all this. It may gratify certain sorts of critics, to dwell on the undoubted facts, that a certain hardness of manner is visible even in the happiest of his works; that his portraits are often of a severe aspect, with a touch too much of the vinegar of the times in them; and that he has reached but seldom the perfect ease and happy gracefulness of nature. His outlines are correct, his colouring lucid, and his proportions just; and he was the first native of our island who refused to limit himself to miniatures, like Hilliard and Oliver, and transferred life of the natural dimensions to his canvass. That he stands at the head of the British school of portrait-painting there can, therefore, be no question; nor had England an artist of her own worthy of being named above him in his own walk before the days of Reynolds. When we consider the circumstances of the painter, and his times,—his want of instruc-

tors and models, and the various difficulties which the fanatical prejudices of that dark age must have presented to any cultivator of the graceful arts,—it is impossible not to admit that Scotland has all reason to be proud of George Jamesone.*

* For whatever may be considered as interesting in art, or curious in research, in this memoir, I am indebted to the kindness of my friend, Mr. David Laing of Edinburgh, the well-known bookseller and accomplished antiquarian.

RAMSAY.

Allan Ramsay, principal painter to George the Third, was the son of Allan Ramsay the poet, and Christian Ross his wife, and born at Edinburgh, in the year 1713; the eldest of seven children. His descent from the noble family of Dalhousie is clear and undisputed: it was claimed in verse by his father, and admitted by the contemporary Earl, who thought it to his honour that the restorer of Scottish national poetry was of the family tree. The author of the Gentle Shepherd was, in fact, the great grandson of the laird of Cockpen, a younger brother of that old house.

Of the painter's early years we have but a brief account. He began to sketch at twelve: Edwards, in his anecdotes, says he was "rather self-taught." The first notice we have of him is in a letter from his father to Smibert the painter, in 1736; when the artist was twenty-three years old. "My son Allan has been pursuing his science since he was a dozen years auld: was with Mr. Hyffidg in London for some time, about two years ago; has since been painting here like a Raphael: sets out for the seat of the Beast beyond the Alps within a month hence, to be away two years. I'm sweer* to

* *Sweer*, i. e. *loath*.

part with him, but canna stem the current which flows from the advice of his patrons, and his own inclination." The patronage withheld from the father was, in a fit of repentance, bestowed on the son. He left Edinburgh for Rome, in June, 1736: there he studied three years, chiefly under Solimane and Imperiale, two artists of much celebrity in their day; he then returned with whatever he had learned to Scotland; painted the head of Duncan Forbes, and his own sister Janet Ramsay, both in New Hall, near Edinburgh; also an excellent portrait of Archibald Duke of Argyle, in his robes as Lord of Session, now in the Exchange, Glasgow; and finally removed to London. — the exact time is unknown.

He found friends there of some value. The Earl of Bridgewater was one of his earliest patrons; and as the course of events brought him into power, Lord Bute took the lead, and introduced him to Frederick Prince of Wales, whose portrait he painted both in full length and in profile. But the work which brought him more immediately into notice, was a whole length of Bute himself: there was a calm representation of nature, without the mannered affectation of squareness which prevailed among his contemporaries; the posture was very elegant; and the legs so remarkably handsome, that Reynolds thought it necessary to exert himself more than usual in a full length which he had on his easel, saying, with a smile, "I wish to show legs with Ramsay's Lord Bute."

Ramsay's studies at Rome had not been confined to art: "he was smit," says Fuseli, "with

the love of classic lore, and desired to trace on dubious vestiges the haunts of ancient genius and learning." For this task he was eminently qualified: he was a good Latin, French, and Italian scholar; and, indeed, had mastered most of the living languages of Europe, excepting the Russian: in his latter years, too, he studied Greek, and made such progress as entitled him to be called "a pretty scholar." His German he afterwards found of singular advantage to him at court. He was accused of being more anxious to be thought an accomplished scholar, and a man of fine understanding and taste, than a good painter, — a profession for which he was said to have but a cold regard. "You will not find a man," said Dr. Johnson, who knew him well, "in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, or more elegance, than in Ramsay's."

His admiration of the style of the great Italian masters brought upon him the wrath of Hogarth; and his now visible success in life, the satire of Churchill. The former desired to pun him down under the name of Ram's eye; and, what was severer, satirised him, in the Battle of the Pictures, in that long lot of old paintings impressed with the image and cross of St. Andrew; and Churchill, when he wrote the Prophecy of Famine, coupled him with his father in these disparaging lines: —

> Thence came the Ramsays, men of worthy note,
> Of whom one paints as well 's the other wrote.

But for the satire of either the painter or the

poet he seems to have cared little personally, and his father's fame was such as could take care of itself: the Gentle Shepherd will most probably be heard of as a work of genius, as long at least as the best invectives of a tippling priest,

Alike debauched in body, soul, and song.

The feuds which in those days distracted the united commonwealths of letters and art may be traced in many a bitter verse, and satiric print, and sarcastic memorandum. Ramsay nevertheless prospered in his profession: his skill in art, and his reputation for good sense and learning, obtained him most extensive employment; his pencil was called to ceilings and to walls, as well as to portraits; and he had several workmen under him, who supplied bodies, where he painted heads. Nor did he confine himself exclusively to his studies: he made a second journey to Rome, where he staid several months; another to Edinburgh, where he remained long enough to establish, in 1754, "The Select Society." He amassed money also; for when his father died in embarrassed circumstances, in 1757, he paid his debts, and settled a pension on his unmarried sister, Janet Ramsay, who survived to 1804. Indeed, I am informed, on the best authority, that before he had the luck to become a favourite with the King he was perfectly independent as to fortune, having, in one way or another, accumulated not less than forty thousand pounds.

With the accession of George the Third came the golden days of Ramsay:— the great merit of Reynolds was but partially acknowledged, for,

from some unexplained cause, the King neither liked him as a man, nor admired him as an artist; the wind of court favour, therefore, filled Ramsay's sails, and he obtained distinction as the first, where he at best deserved notice as the second. But this was not all; Shakelton, portrait-painter to the court, was, in 1767, removed from his place; and the tradition of the London studios is, that he broke his heart and died when he heard that Ramsay was appointed in his stead. This increase of honour brought increase of work: he was obliged to engage five assistants. Their names prove how much foreigners mingled with natives in the great manufacture of portraiture in those days: — 1. Mrs. Black, a lady of less talent than good taste; 2. Vandycke, a Dutchman, allied more in name than talent with him of the days of Charles the First; 3. Eikhart, a German, well acquainted with draperies; 4. Roth, another German, who aided in the subordinate parts; and, 5. David, commonly called Davie Martin, a Scotchman, and the favourite chief draughtsman and helper. One Vesperies, a foreigner, was occasionally employed to paint fruits and flowers. Such was the desire to have a portrait by Ramsay, that he was fain to employ any body to aid in advancing his pictures. He invariably, however, painted the head with his own hand; at least it was not till his pupil Philip Reinagle began to distinguish himself, that he trusted any thing of that order to the skill of others.

As his Majesty invariably presented portraits of himself and the Queen to all his ambassadors

and governors of colonies, Ramsay had a busy time, manufacturing these royal effigies. The King sat for his coronation portrait, as it was called, in Buckingham Palace: in this piece he appeared in his royal robes; and in the like costume were all the succeeding pictures painted. It often happened that the King desired the painter to convey his easel and canvass to the dining-room, that he might observe his progress, and have the pleasure of his conversation. The painter, a bold, spirited, well-informed man, perfectly conversant with the state of the various kingdoms of Europe, spoke freely and without disguise; and as he was the only person about the court, save the domestics, who could speak German, the Queen more especially found it an agreeable variety to chat with him in her native language. Ramsay, in short, was a great favourite. When the King had finished his usual allowance of boiled mutton and turnips, he would rise and say, "Now, Ramsay, sit down in my place, and take your dinner." This partiality produced, of course, abundance of enemies; but they could do him no harm — for he was not dependent upon royal favour; and the extent of his fortune was, at least, as well known, and as sincerely envied, as either his accomplishments, or his courtly success. He had many high friends: Lord Bute, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Bath, Lord Chesterfield, and the Duke of Richmond in particular, were frequently at his house, and that more, it was said, on matters connected with politics than painting. Ramsay loved and enjoyed this, for politics were his delight; he wrote with great

vigour and facility, and dipped his pen freely in the public controversies of those times. He was known to be the author of many ingenious pieces on history, politics, and criticism, signed "Investigator," and since collected into a volume. He acquired credit by a pamphlet on the subject of Elizabeth Canning, which had the merit of opening the eyes of the nation to the real truth of that mysterious story. He corresponded, too, with Voltaire and Rousseau; both of whom he had visited when abroad; and his letters are said to have been elegant and witty. Ramsay, in short, led the life of an elegant, accomplished man of the world, and public favourite; the companion of the first of his day, and the admitted ornament of the highest societies.

When he was busy with his first portrait of Queen Charlotte all the crown jewels and the regalia, too, were sent to him: the painter said, such a mass of jewels and gold deserved a guard, and sentinels were accordingly posted day and night in front and rear of his house. His residence was in Harley Street, on the west side, just above the Mews; and his studio consisted of a set of coachmen's rooms and haylofts gutted, all thrown into one long gallery.

Soon after his appointment to be King's painter he made a third excursion to Rome, accompanied by his son, who has since risen to distinction in the army; and here, we are told, his chief pleasure lay in examining and copying the ancient Greek and Latin inscriptions in the corridors of the Vatican. This kind of employment, it seems, he loved infinitely better than his pro-

fessional labours: he had, however, enough of the artist, and the Briton, too, about him, to be much annoyed when he found the genius of his country questioned. The President of the Roman Academy, desirous of doing all honour to the King of Great Britain's painter, showed him the School of Art, and all the drawings of the students; but was rash enough to drop a hint that England had nothing of the kind that could compare with what he was exhibiting. Ramsay kindled up at this, and said, "Well, sir, I will show you how we draw in England." He instantly wrote to Davie Martin, desiring him to put his drawings into his trunk, and bring them to Rome. On the arrival of Davie, his master arranged all his drawings in due order, and then called in the President and his scholars. Ramsay always declared this to be the proudest day of his life: "for," said he, "the Italians were confounded and overcome, and British skill triumphant." That he believed in his victory there can be no doubt: but we know not what the Italian artists said of it. Rome at that time had few skilful hands, but in drawing she has generally excelled; her deficiency is in sentiment and in colour. Ramsay indulged his champion with a month's look at the wonders of the eternal city, and then sent him home to spread the news of this perhaps unlooked-for victory.

Ramsay himself presently returned to England, and resumed his flourishing practice, until an unfortunate accident befell him, which made him lay down the brush for the rest of his life. Reading of a fire in which lives were lost, he was

so touched by the calamity, that he rose and desired all his household and pupils to follow him, and he would show the way how they might make their escape, even though, as in the story he had been perusing, all the lower part of the premises were on fire. He pushed a ladder through the loft-door, desired them all to watch what he did, went quickly up, and said, "Now I am safe, I can escape along the roofs of the adjoining houses." As he turned to come down again he missed the step, fell, and dislocated his right arm in so severe a way that it never fairly recovered.

Happening at the time to be occupied with a portrait of the King for the Excise Office, he held up his right arm with his left, and so finished the work; and, what is remarkable, it was said, both by himself and others, to be the finest portrait he ever painted.

This momentary effort speaks much for the spirit of the man: but his constitution had been sorely shattered; and finding himself in a disabled state, he resolved to try once more the vivifying air of Italy. Philip Reinagle had now become skilful in the art; and Ramsay, leaving his brush in his pupil's hand, gave him an order to complete, during his own absence, fifty pairs of kings and queens at ten guineas each. Accompanied by his son, he set off from London; but his shoulder continued painful; sleepless nights more and more shook his frame: and his early alacrity of spirit was gone. He reached Rome, however, in safety, and established himself once more among the scenes most dear to his

fancy. Meanwhile, the copying of kings and queens began to weary Reinagle; and he wrote to Ramsay that ten guineas was not price sufficient. Ramsay augmented it to thirty; still this did not render the task less irksome: Reinagle manufactured the article according to contract; but the dose of portraiture was so strong, that when, after the toil of six years, he completed his undertaking, he never could think of that department again without a sort of horror. His imitation of Ramsay's style had by this time become so perfect, that the work of the pupil could not be distinguished from that of the master.

Ramsay continued to reside in Italy several years, and maintained a correspondence with some of the first men of his day both in France and England. His health, however, never was thoroughly restored; and by degrees that love of home came upon him, which, it is said, comes upon all. In the summer of 1784 he departed for his native land, which he expected to gain by short and easy stages. He reached Paris with difficulty: the motion of the carriage had brought on a slow fever, which medicine failed to remove, and he died in August, in the seventy-first year of his age.

Ramsay was middle sized, well made, and finely proportioned, and his looks were acute and intelligent. He was hasty and irritable, passionate and headstrong, but easily smoothed down and pacified; a steadfast friend, and a most agreeable companion. In extent of learning and variety of knowledge he surpassed all artists of his time; and was considered an ornament to the Royal

Academy, not so much as a portrait painter—though even in that he was second only to Reynolds—as for the accomplishments of a gentleman and scholar, his taste in poetry as well as in art, and his not inconsiderable powers as a writer. He was fond of delicate eating, and was as determined a consumer of tea as Dr. Johnson himself, but had no relish for stronger potations: it is said, that even the smell of a bottle of claret was too much for him.

In his own art we may, perhaps, trace something of the same rather effeminate turn. His execution was neat, careful, and finished; but the freedom of his pencilling never reached the character of boldness: the placid and the contemplative were his element,—energy he never even attempted; and his colouring seldom deserted the regions of the pale and the grey. Walpole has recorded his belief, that if he did not achieve a first-rate name, it was for want of subjects rather than of genius; and I shall conclude, with the more detailed opinion of Northcote, in his lately published Conversations:—"There was Ramsay, of whom Sir Joshua used to say, that he was the most sensible among all the painters of his time, but he has left little to show it. His manner was dry and timid. He stopped short in the middle of his work, because he knew exactly how much it wanted. Now and then we find tints and sketches, which show what he might have been if his hand had been equal to his conceptions. I have seen a picture of his of the Queen soon after she was married; a profile, and slightly done, but it was a

paragon of elegance. She had a fan in her hand;—Lord, how she held that fan! It was weak in execution, and ordinary in features, but the farthest possible removed from any thing like vulgarity. A professor might despise it; but in the mental part I have never seen any thing ot Vandyke's equal to it. I should find it difficult to produce any thing of Sir Joshua's that conveys an idea of more grace and delicacy." *

* For the most characteristic parts of this memoir I am indebted to the kindness of Richard Ramsay Reinagle, Esq. R.A.

ROMNEY.

GEORGE ROMNEY, in the opinion of Flaxman, the first of all our painters, for poetic dignity of conception, was born at Beckside, near Dalton, in Lancashire, on the 15th of December, 1734. His ancestors, yeomen of good repute, lived till the stormy times of the Commonwealth near Appleby in Westmoreland; when the civil tumults compelled his grandfather, as yet a young man, to seek refuge in the county of Lancaster. He married there at the mature age of sixty; but such were his temperate habits and the excellence of his constitution, that he lived to see his children's children. John, one of his sons, was taught the united trades of carpenter, joiner, and cabinet-maker. Subdivisions in labour prevailed less then than now; and though something of a dreamer in curious projects and expensive plans, he acquired considerable wealth, and, what was better, such reputation for worth and fair dealing, that his neighbours called him "Honest John Romney." He took to wife Ann Simpson of Sladebank, in Cumberland, a clever and frugal woman, who loved to set her house in good order, and see her children brought up in piety and knowledge. Of

GEORGE ROMNEY, R.A.

Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1832

MONEY.

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en brought up in piety and knowledge. Of

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sons they had at least four; viz. William, who died when about to depart to the West Indies; James, who rose to the rank of colonel in the service of the East India Company; Peter, who gave such proofs of genius in art as made his early death be very deeply regretted; and GEORGE, who acquired such fame in painting, as, at this day, renders his story a matter of national interest.

Of all our eminent artists, Romney has perhaps been the most fortunate in his biographers. Reynolds squandered his wines, his portraits, and, finally, his fortune, on men of skill and genius; yet none of them wrote a word worthy of him when he was gone. Romney moved among persons of less literary eminence, yet his character as a man and his talents as a painter have been more cleverly as well as cordially dealt by. Cumberland the dramatist penned a short but able memoir, soon after the death of the artist; Hayley the poet next put forth an elaborate life, accompanied with engravings and epistles in verse; and lately the painter's son, the Reverend John Romney, has published an account more interesting than either. Of these works it may be safely said, that the first is imperfect and unsatisfactory; that the second, though diffuse in its details, is not very correct; and that the third, with all its merits, has too much of the tenderness of the son to be so particular as could be wished as to personal and domestic matters. If it be thought that I treat the names of the poet and the dramatist with less ceremony than their fame deserves, I answer, that I have but adopted,

from feeling their accuracy, opinions already expressed. "The wish of a deceased friend," says Hayley, "whose professional merit was eminent, would be alone sufficient to animate a biographer; but I have an additional motive to prepare a life of Romney: a memorial of my friend has appeared, which I could not peruse without feelings of indignation; for though it bears the signature of an author of great and of deserved celebrity, it is in truth a coarse misrepresentation of the man whose memory it is my duty and my delight to defend, as far as justice can allow me to proceed in his defence." No doubt Hayley imagined that the life which he composed would extinguish that of the dramatist; and as he had collected much of his information from the painter's own lips, and undertaken the task at his own "affectionate desire," the world were disposed to be satisfied with his performance. The life of Romney, by his son, has, however, thrown doubt and suspicion upon that written by the poet. These are the reverend biographer's words:—"He saw, with mortification, that all the accounts which had been given of Romney and his works were either defective, false, or injurious: his scruples arising from diffidence soon yielded to a more powerful impulse; and he should have deemed himself guilty of very culpable indifference if he had not endeavoured to dispel the malignant cloud that hangs over his father's memory, and to place his character in its true light." To place his character as a man and a painter in its true light, is also the wish of the present writer; and he will endeavour to

avail himself of the labours of all his predecessors.

It is much the fashion in the north country, among people of substance, to give the eldest son of the family a fine education, in order that the paternal name may be maintained with honour in the land, while the junior branches are less carefully dealt by: and the humbler orders have mimicked the example. It is not unusual to see the younger sons of our farmers or peasants holding the plough or watching the sheep, while the elder-born are in the church, the army, or the law. Something like this happened in the family of John Romney. William, the eldest, was instructed in classics, in which he excelled; "but George," says his son, "not making much progress in school learning, and being moreover of a sedate and steady disposition, was taken from school in his eleventh year, to be employed at home, where his services were wanted."—"Having discovered," says Hayley, "soon after he had attained the age of twelve years, a great passion for mechanics, he employed himself in a variety of devices, particularly in carving small figures in wood, to which he was led by the ardour of early uninstructed genius. He was enthusiastically fond of music, and passed much time in experiments to make violins of various shapes and powers. In advanced life he took great delight in recollecting the ingenious industry that he exerted as a boy. He carefully preserved the favourite violin of his own construction; and has been heard to play upon it in

the house which he filled with the productions of his pencil." This skill in the carving of wood, and the construction of fiddles, speaks, however, of a more intimate acquaintance with the hand-saw and the plane than Mr. Hayley seems willing to acknowledge; and on this head Flaxman gives direct evidence: — "Romney (says he) was brought up to the business of a cabinet-maker: — and this employment, which to a common observer would seem little better than an ingenious mechanical drudgery, led his inquisitive mind to contemplate the principles of mathematical science, and to acquaint himself with the elements of architecture." There were, however, other pursuits, and of a curious kind, in which he was presently deep.

There lived at that time in Dalton one Williamson, a watchmaker, a singular enthusiast. He was fond of music, an admirable performer on the violin, skilful in the uses of the camera obscura, not unacquainted with drawing, and above all, a professor of the exploded science of alchemy — a love of which, after being expelled from London, lingered late, here and there, in the provinces. Young Romney was this man's almost constant companion; with him he fiddled, planned, drew, and moreover dipped into the mysterious science of the transmutation of metals. Nor were they idle dreamers, who only sat and amused themselves with strange imaginings; they had a furnace and crucibles, if not all the apparatus with which tradition or history sets up the alchemist: —

Your stone, your medicine, and your chrysospherma,
Your sal, your sulphur, and your mercury,
Your oil of height, your tree of life, your blood,
Your toad, your crow, your dragon, and your panther,
Your sun, your moon, your firmament, your adrop.

Time, labour, and money, were expended in such pursuits, and preparations were made for one grand and crowning experiment which was expected to end in a shower of gold. As the hour drew nigh, the anxiety of the alchemist increased; the fire which had been kept burning for nine months, showed flame of a promising colour —the contents of the crucibles assumed a yellowish hue — and the projector saw in imagination riches rivalling the dreams of Sir Epicure Mammon. It seems his wife, on that fated day, was entertaining a select coterie of gossips; and knowing that workers in fire loved to taste the cup, summoned her husband to make merry. Romney, in relating the story, said, "Now Williamson in vain represented that the moment of fate was at hand; his wife's entreaties or remonstrances prevailed; and as he took his seat and drank, his furnace, with all that it contained, blew up." His wife was in consternation. "Never was conjugal complaisance more unfortunate," says Hayley, "save in the case of our first parents." He hastened to his study; on looking at the scene of ruin, one of his companions comforted him with words like those of Face in Ben Jonson —

O, sir, we are defeated! all the works
Are flown in fumo, every glass is burst,
Furnace, and all rent down! as if a bolt
Of thunder had been driven through the house;

> Retorts, receivers, pelicans, bolt-heads,
> All struck in shivers.

Romney was ready with his sympathy. The alchemist, however, refused to be comforted; and his rage went a bitter length. He conceived a permanent hatred against his wife — left his home — forsook her for ever, and associated with another woman: — "an evil example," says Hayley, with ludicrous affectation, "which was *not without its influence on Romney* in a future day."

The story of Williamson made, however, a strong impression on Romney's fancy. In his declining years he amused himself with the idea of sketching a melodrama, "representing," says his son, "the progress of an alchemist in quest of the philosopher's stone. The sanguine expectations of the philosopher were to have been heightened in every scene; but as he approached the crisis of the discovery, and was about to reap the golden recompense of all his toils, an ill-timed and prying curiosity in his wife, ignorant of his sublime pursuits, made frustrate, by one single interdicted act, the consecutive experiments of years. A tremendous explosion then took place; the devil himself appeared; but instead of gold, there remained nothing but broken crucibles; and all those glittering visions which had so long figured in his imagination vanished at once in smoke." Such a succession of dramatic scenes is much too complicated for the pencil. A story which enchains, when related or written, may, nevertheless, want those picturesque points so necessary in a painting. The keenest wit and the rarest humour often have nothing in common

with shape or with form, and may be compared to sounds which can be described but not drawn.

How and at what period the love of art came upon Romney, has not been clearly shown. Cumberland asserts, that it was inspired by the cuts in the Universal Magazine. Hayley, who probably had the story from the painter, says, that he consumed the time of his fellow-workmen in sketching them in various attitudes: while the artist's son states, that Da Vinci's Treatise on Painting, illustrated by many fine engravings, was early in his hands. All these stories may be true: genius draws its materials from many sources. The sight of a few fine prints in an obscure village in Yorkshire awakened the spark in Stothard; the carved figures in an old picture-frame did as much for Chantrey; and Wilkie's sense of the mingled comic and serious was first shown in drawing the head of one of his school-fellows, who sat to learn his neglected lesson on that bad eminence, the stool of shame. Romney himself used to relate, that one day in church he saw a man with a most singular face, from which he could never take his eye: he spoke of it when he went home, and his parents desired him to describe the man. He took a pencil, and from memory delineated the face so skilfully, and with such strength of resemblance, that they immediately named the person he meant; and the boy was so pleased with this, that he began to draw with more serious application.

Cumberland, with some boldness, describes the artist as "a child of nature, who had never seen or heard any thing that could elicit his genius or

urge him to emulation, and who became a painter without a prototype." His genius, indeed, was the gift of nature; but his skill of hand and his knowledge of colours had to be obtained at the common price — study and application.

A regular instructor came in the hour of need: this was an eccentric young painter, whose love of fine dress, and loftiness of carriage, obtained for him among the peasantry of the North the title of *Count* Steele. This person had derived some knowledge from one Wright, a painter of shipping in Liverpool; and had moreover studied for a year in Paris; and making his appearance in Lancashire as a painter of domestic pictures, attracted some notice. It happened that Romney had at this period not only covered many deals and boards in the shop with sketches of his fellow-workmen, but had ventured farther, and made a drawing of Mrs. Gardiner, a lady of some taste and discernment, who on seeing his performance commended him much, and encouraged him to proceed. All this was represented to his father, and something like a consultation was held, when it was resolved that he should be placed under a regular practitioner; and as Steele was then at Kendal, and wanted a pupil, it was determined to place him in his studio. To Steele Romney was accordingly conducted, and, at the age of nineteen, bound apprentice for four years, to learn "the art or science of painting, and to obey all lawful and reasonable commands." The premium was fixed at twenty pounds. Romney was not one of those fortunate men, who choose sagacious friends, or make

happy engagements, in their youth. Williamson the alchemist, whom he continued to speak of with tears of admiration long after he had risen to fame, was at the best but a worthless vagabond; and Count Steele, though an artist of some talent, and no despicable dauber, as Cumberland represents him, had failings which proved ruinous to himself and injurious to his pupil. His love of dress involved him in debts which he could not easily discharge, and his love of idleness made matters worse — misrule was mistress of his household. Romney complained that he had to grind colours frequently which he was not allowed to use, and was made a drudge. He confessed, however, that he acquired considerable knowledge in the preparation and mixing of colours, through his own spirit of observation, as well as from his master's instruction, whose boast it was that he had studied chiaro scuro under Vanloo.

The master of Romney found by and by that painting portraits at four guineas each was but a slow way of acquiring a fortune: he sought to mend his income by marriage: and his French airs and finery aided him in securing the affections of a young lady of some fortune, with whom he resolved to elope to Gretna Green. She was vigilantly guarded: nevertheless Count Steele, through the active agency of Romney, carried her triumphantly over the border, leaving his pupil to superintend the studio during the honeymoon. The extreme sensibility of Romney's nature is repeatedly alluded to by Hayley; and it is noteworthy, how many of the most important actions of his life, whether to his discredit or his honour,

are traced by this sagacious friend to the same source. His extreme sensibility brought a fever upon him at the conclusion of the Count's elopement affair; and his extreme sensibility made him fall in love with a young woman, who attended him during his sickness. Of this wedding, his friend the poet, and his own son, give accounts somewhat different. "The juvenile pupil, left desolate and sick in the lodgings of his distant master," says Hayley, "was attended by a young woman of the house, whom he described as a person of a compassionate character. The pity so natural to a female attendant on a young lonely invalid, and the gratitude of a lively convalescent, produced an event which can hardly surprise any person acquainted with human nature — a precipitate marriage. George Romney, the inexperienced apprentice to a painter himself of little experience, was married in Kendal, to Mary Abbot, of Kirkland, on the 14th day of October, 1756."—"He had a nice perception of what is beautiful in the forms of nature," says the Rev. John Romney, "an imagination that exaggerated its realities, and a quick susceptibility of impression from such objects as delighted his fancy: the consequence was, that he became enamoured of a young female, into whose society he had happened to be introduced soon after he came to Kendal. The object of his affection was in the same rank of life with himself, and respectably connected. She excelled more in symmetry of form than in regularity of features; yet in this latter particular she was far from deficient. She had had the misfortune to

lose her father when she was a child: her mother was, however, an amiable and prudent woman, and discharged her maternal duties ably; instilling into the minds of her two daughters the principles of morality and religion, and illustrating her precepts by her own correct example."

His precipitate marriage drew upon him the rebuke of his parents; and he vindicated himself with some firmness and skill. "If you consider every thing deliberately," he wrote, "you will find it to be the best affair that ever happened to me: because, if I have fortune, I shall make a better painter than I should otherwise have done, as it will be a spur to my application; and my thoughts being now still, and not obstructed by youthful follies, I can practise with more diligence and success than ever." In fulfilment of his own maxims, he devoted himself to his art with the most resolute industry; his application was incessant: and having no other models to study from, save those of nature, he acquired a style peculiar to himself, which in his higher fortunes he modified, but never abandoned. To his wife, too, he was in those early days kind and indulgent; indeed, she seems to have been in every respect worthy of his affections: she supplied him secretly with money in his professional tours with Steele, conveying half a guinea at a time under the seal of her letter; and he rewarded her regard by an acceptable present of his own portrait in oil — an early essay, hard, dry, and laboured.

Though Hayley quotes, for the purpose of rejecting, the celebrated dictum of Parolles —

A young man married, is a man, that's marr-ed —

he, nevertheless, seems to have considered the doctrine a wise one. With respect to the tender subject of Romney's marriage, the poet appears to have spared no pains to ascertain the true state of the artist's feelings; and as he had himself some experience in the art of escaping from the sacred duties of wedlock, we must allow due weight to his exposition of the case. According to this biographer, his friend soon perceived that marriage was an obstacle to his studies; that he was ruined as an artist, and that he might bid farewell to all hopes of fame and glory. Love, which, while it ministered at his sick couch, appeared with the lustre of an angel, assumed, the very moment the heyday was over, the hue of a demon, inflicting such mental sufferings as would have "excited," says the gentle Hayley, "compassion in a heart of flint. — The terror," our "swan of Eartham" proceeds, "of precluding himself from those distant honours which he panted for in his profession, by appearing in the world as a young married man, agitated the ambitious artist almost to distraction, and made him resolve, very soon after his marriage, as he had no means of breaking the fetters which he wildly regarded as inimical to the improvement and exertion of genius, to hide them as much as possible from his troubled fancy. The return of his master from his nuptial excursion, and his sudden removal from Kendal to York, which took place in a few days after the marriage of his apprentice, afforded a most seasonable termination to this excruciating conflict in the mind of

Romney. Being thus removed from the object of his inquietude, he gradually recovered the powers of his extraordinary mind — a mind of exquisite sensibility, and of towering faculties, but unhappily distracted with a tumultuary crowd of ambitious and apprehensive conceits."

No man of right feeling can accept this account, or regard Romney otherwise than as one ready to sacrifice the peace of a worthy wife to his own selfishness or ambition. The sensibility which rose up against her whom he had loved and wedded was sensibility of an evil sort: nor are we to sympathise with him on account of his extreme youth — "the juvenile Romney" of Hayley was a man nearly twenty-two years old when he married. The account which the painter's son gives of these domestic arrangements softens, however, the sharp delineation of the poet: he speaks of no estrangement arising from the dread of being ruined as an artist: he denies the wish, which Hayley makes Romney express, to live separate from his wife; and moreover proves, by many circumstances, that something like conjugal love was still of his household. To refuse belief to the statement of the filial biographer, on such a subject, would be very hardy: at the same time it should be remembered, that Hayley was not only requested by the painter to write his life, but was also supplied with many materials, and every where speaks as from authority. This much is certain — that he repeats his account often, and always strongly; and I know not how to dismiss it, unless we should suppose that the poet sought to

palliate his own proceedings by a side wind, under the pretext of telling another man's story. "Romney," he says, "had received from nature a propensity to take more than common delight in contemplating, both as a man and an artist, the endearing smiles and playfulness of infancy; yet the over-ruling influence of ambition impelled him to sacrifice all those inestimable enjoyments, which a man of tender feelings, who has chosen a dutiful wife, is generally anxious to secure, by devoting some of his time to cultivate, even in their earliest years, the affections of his children. On his return from York to Kendal, after an absence of several months, he had not only a dutiful wife, but an infant boy, to attach him to a domestic establishment: but the imagination of Romney, though tender and even trembling, was ardent in the extreme; it was like the spirit of Alexander's horse, that, although apparently equal to any exploit, would start at his own shadow."

Having, by the help of this easy system of morality, satisfied himself that wedlock was only designed to hold common minds in order, and certainly not to keep down a mounting spirit such as his, Romney next began to consider the nature of the engagement which made him the servant of Count Steele: there was, however, some excuse for this. That person was one of those happy sons of genius, who sacrifice largely to the false gods of extravagance and finery; and who, in their enjoyment, seldom think of the time of payment, or of the desolation which their selfishness may spread among the humble

furnishers of their wardrobes and tables. Having painted the heads of all who seemed willing to sit, and being pressed for money, which he knew not where to find, Steele took his wife by the hand, and, bidding his pupil follow, said he should go to Ireland. Romney, perhaps, already perceived that he had followed far enough the fortunes of one who had little more knowledge to impart; and having, moreover, felt, according to Hayley, the bondage of matrimony, was less willing to abide in bondage of another kind. Ten pounds, which Steele had borrowed from him, were considered, in a mutual conference between the parties, as an equivalent for the unexpired term of servitude; the indenture was cancelled, and Romney, a free man, commenced on his own account when twenty-three years old.

The first of his efforts in oil, on his own account, is of a very humble kind — namely, a hand holding a letter, for the post-office window at Kendal. Portraits, however, were the works which brought him bread. His earliest are half lengths of Walter Strickland of Sizergh, and his wife, friends from whom he received many attentions. It was at their residence that he saw the Sir William Strickland of Lely, a Bishop of Namur and a French Admiral by Rigaud,— "the only pictures by other masters," says his son, "which he had any opportunity of studying, almost of seeing, before he went to London." There is also from the hand of Romney a portrait of Charles Strickland; a full length third size figure. He is sitting with a fishing-rod in

his hand, and a waterfall in the back-ground. Some other works of that period merit notice; more particularly the portrait of Morland of Cappelthwaite, in his shooting dress, with his favourite dog beside him; and that of Colonel Wilson of Abbothall, accompanied by three spaniels. The dogs of these compositions are drawn with a freedom worthy of nature: artists have compared them to the dogs of Sneyders. There was no want of patronage on the part of the gentry of Westmoreland; indeed, there was a general feeling, his son says, in his favour, — a love for the man, which certainly would have been withheld, had he openly shown that disregard for the obligations of wedlock, which Mr. Hayley has, apparently with much unction and sympathy, described.

All his sitters, however, had not the generous feelings of his friends of Sizergh and Abbothall. The Rev. Dr. Bateman, the well known master of Sedbergh school, sat for his portrait at the moderate price of two guineas: the picture remained on hand, and a request of payment called forth the following singular epistle: — "I must take the liberty of expostulating a little with you, about your mean and tergiversating behaviour with regard to your promise of drawing my picture over again, at your return, with an addition to the price. Did you agree to that, or did you not? You know you did; and yet you now fly from your word, as you are going, as you think, out of my reach; for you shall certainly have a writ upon you for nonperformance of contract. I shall not only do this, but I shall

represent you in your proper colours (to borrow a term of your art), both here and to your friends at London, unless you perform your agreement. You will also see yourself and your behaviour painted in one of the public papers; as I am persuaded it is one of the most flagrant and scandalous breaches of faith I ever met with, and therefore merits a public exposition, and deserves to be exhibited as an object of public detestation. If you had come over only to make this picture tolerable, you would, by my recommendation, have got two or three more. *Cave litem, perfide pictor.*" An attorney's note lowered the Doctor's tone, and brought him to reason. Artists seldom find such rough customers as that learned man.

The time of Romney was not solely occupied in the manufacture of portraits, male and female; he had found leisure to make a score or so of compositions, chiefly of a cabinet size. Some twelve of them were copies after engravings, I apprehend, rather than originals; but the remaining eight, such as they were, seem to have been all his own: viz. — 1. Lear wakened by Cordelia; 2. Lear in the storm, tearing off his robes; 3. A landscape with figures; 4. A quarrel; 5. A Shandean piece; 6. A droll scene in an alehouse; 7. A group of heads by candle-light; 8. A tooth drawn by candle-light. These pictures he exhibited in the Town-hall of Kendal; distributed free admissions; and then dispersed the whole by means of a lottery composed of eighty tickets, price half a guinea each. Of these early works the fate of four only has been traced with certainty. "Lear wakened by Cor-

delia" was, after the lapse of many years, found in a broker's shop in London, and sent to Adam Walker, the natural philosopher, one of the earliest friends of Romney,—the same who supplied the world with information concerning the family of Hogarth. Mrs. Romney was the model for Cordelia. "Lear in the storm, tearing off his robes," is now the property of Mr. Braddyll of Conishead Priory; this was the very first attempt, and a bold one it was, which Romney made in poetic painting. The whole scene is seen in the strong light and shade of torches: there is a visible observance of nature; and, with lamentable deficiency in drawing, there is force of character. The "landscape with figures" was lost sight of till the year 1798, when the painter, accompanied by his son, went into the north of England with the intention of purchasing a house. The latter looked at a solitary painting hanging in the gallery of Barfield, a residence advertised for sale, and asked the owner by whom it was painted. "By the famous Romney, sir," was the answer. "I cast a significant glance at Mr. Romney," says his son, "but said nothing—

Con viso, che tacendo dicea, taci;

for we were not known. I then proceeded to examine it with more attention. It represents a party, consisting of three gentlemen and two ladies, going on board a boat on a lake. The ladies show great timidity, so natural to the female character under the impression of danger; which expression is frequently accompanied with

a certain degree of grace; but are politely urged by their attendant gallants. The colouring is beautifully clear, and as fresh as if recently painted. The execution evinces great facility and freedom of handling, and the touches are spirited and neat. The landscape also shows that he would have excelled in that branch of the art, had he made it his particular study. I have heard Mrs. Romney speak with much delight of a party of pleasure which she and her husband made with some friends to Bowness and the island on Windermere lake." That such things dwelt on her memory is a proof of the worth of her heart; she loved to recall the kind looks and gentle acts of her husband during the days of her youth, and dwelt with no bitterness of feeling on his long and unaccountable estrangement.

The fourth and last of those works is "the Shandean piece," which found its way into the possession of the late Sir Allan Chambre. It represents Dr. Slop, all splashed with his journey, ushered by Obadiah into the parlour where Walter Shandy and Uncle Toby are discoursing on the nature of woman. The figures seem heavy and inert; the expression of the group has, however, had its admirers. The "Death of Le Fevre" is an attempt of a higher order. "The figures," says Adam Walker, "were about eighteen inches high, and wonderfully expressive. The dying lieutenant was looking at Uncle Toby, who sat mute at the foot of the bed; and by the motion of his hand was recommending his son to his care. The boy was kneeling by the bedside,

and, with eyes that expressed his anguish of heart, was as it were turning from a dying to a living father, begging protection; a most pathetic figure. Trim was standing at a distance, in his usual attitude, with a face full of grief. What became of this admirable picture I cannot tell." Enquiries have been made after this work in vain. Romney took it with him to London. He was introduced to Sterne at York, where Steele painted his portrait; and it has been imagined from this, that personal civilities and mutual acknowledgments of genius had passed, at this early period, between Romney and Yorick. Of this, however, there are no proofs; and, indeed, Romney himself, in one of his conversations, seems rather to discountenance the story.

As it has pleased Cumberland, and others of Romney's occasional companions, to represent him as a man coarse and illiterate, even after he had achieved his reputation, I may as well, before he leaves, for London, the mountains and lakes of Westmoreland, enquire into his attainments. It is true that he was taken from school in his eleventh year, — that from that period all regular instruction ceased, — and, that if knowledge could only be gained in "halls and colleges," Romney must be classed with the illiterate; but knowledge he certainly had found somewhere, and that, too, before he made his appearance in the metropolis. Nature had given him strong talents, a keen eye, curiosity, and imagination; the exercise of his profession kept him in constant collision with people of various orders; — in a word, nature and society held their leaves

open before him; and out of these universal volumes, with such aid of printed books as chance might throw in his way, Romney had, somehow or other, educated himself much better than ninety-nine out of a hundred, in any university in the world, ever were or will be. Were I called upon to furnish proof of these assertions with regard to the painter, it would be almost enough to quote one early letter of his to Adam Walker. The friends were separated: but in dreams they conversed together; and this is Romney's account of one of those imaginary meetings: — "Did I not find more pleasure in imaginative excursions than in bodily enjoyments, I would not give two-pence for this world. But I say my imagination took a journey — a journey it often takes; never a day comes but it is wandering to that same Preston. What it can find there so attractive, God knows. However, when I had travelled over that vast tract of land in half a second, the first object that saluted my sight was a tall lean figure, walking with an important air, as erect as the dancing master in Hogarth's Analysis. 'Who can this be?' I said: 'I certainly must know the person; but he seems so disguised in importance and gravity, which look so like burlesque, that I can scarce forbear smiling.' As he approached nearer, he turned his face towards me — with an earnest look made a stand — threw off his disguise, — by drawing up the muscles of his cheeks and hiding his eyes. I stood motionless three seconds — then ran up to him, caught hold of his hand with the eagerness with which sincere friends generally meet, — 'My dear Walker, how do you

do? By my soul, I am glad to see you.' — 'O sir, not so familiar.' — 'O sir, I humbly beg pardon for saluting your importance in so rough a manner in the open street.'" These are not the words of an illiterate man, but of one who could write freely and well; and who, moreover, could penetrate the grave mask which Adam Walker, as a teacher of natural philosophy, thought it fit and proper to wear over an unexampled kindliness of heart — a spirit filled with universal good will, homely humour, and festive enjoyment.

Romney was now twenty-seven years old, and as his name began to be heard beyond the limits of the province where he lived, his ambition also expanded; he desired a wider field and more enlightened judges. All this he knew could only be attained in London; and London, according to Hayley, had been the mark which he aimed at from the moment of his marriage. With this object in view, he had studied late and early to acquire money and skill; and now, imagining he had enough of both, he became eager to be gone. A man, who has a wife, and a son and daughter, ought to have something worthy of consideration besides himself: but such considerations, according to the author of the Triumphs of Temper, "pressed not much on his feelings. The young painter," says Hayley, "like his early friend, the unfortunate alchemist, beheld in an innocent wife a supposed impediment to every splendid project. Perhaps the example of a friend, whom he had tenderly regarded, might influence the conduct of the painter; at all events he resolved,

instead of settling as a family man, to wander forth alone into the distant world in quest of professional adventures. The state of his finances rendered it impossible for him to execute this resolution immediately; but whenever the fervent fancy of Romney had formed a favourite purpose, he generally verified the maxim of Shakspeare, that 'all impediments in fancy's course are motives of more fancy.' His mental and corporeal powers were admirably suited to triumph over any difficulties which he might have to subdue. He had the spirit of industry united to that of genius, and few mortals could sustain assiduous labour so long as he could in a single occupation. In working rapidly and patiently at different places in the North for a few years, by painting heads as large as life at the price of two guineas, or figures at whole length on a small scale for six guineas, he contrived to raise a sum amounting almost to a hundred pounds: taking thirty for his own travelling expenses, and leaving the residue to support an unoffending partner and two children, he set forth alone, without even a letter of recommendation, to try the chances of life in the metropolis."

This account finds no favour with the son of Romney; who, in answer to Hayley, denies all premeditated intention, on the part of his father, of deserting his wife and children; assures us that he wished to visit London for the sole purpose of their more effectual support — that he consulted his wife, a courageous and energetic woman, on the propriety of the step — and that he had her full permission to try his fortune

in the metropolis. Now, all this I most willingly believe, and shall suppose that Romney set off with the full determination of calling his wife to the head of his house so soon as circumstances permitted. But what did he actually do? He went to London, and there rose almost immediately into eminence; wealth flowed in, and patrons abounded: but the fortunate man kept his marriage a secret among his new friends; and, in fact, from that fatal moment lived with his wife no more till he had waxed old and infirm, and needed a nurse. "If Hayley had had any gratitude in his heart or delicacy in his nature," says the son of the painter, "he would have shown more tenderness for the memory of his deceased friend, and more respect for the feelings of the surviving relations of that friend; but how could delicacy or feeling be expected from a man who has blazoned his own dishonour?" This seems an inadequate reply to the undeniable facts of the case: it must, however, be admitted that Romney's acquaintance lay much among those whose conduct afforded him countenance in this dark part of his doings; for instance, Williamson the unfortunate alchemist, Laurence Sterne, and William Hayley.

Romney set out for London on the 14th of March, 1762, accompanied by two gentlemen of Kendal; and, though menaced by a mounted highwayman, reached his destination in safety in seven days. British art was at that time in high favour. Reynolds stood then, as now, unrivalled in portraiture. Hogarth had long exhibited those domestic paintings which no one

has yet approached. Wilson and Gainsborough showed their mastery over every subject they handled; and West stood forth as the creator of the historical style in the land. There were excellent places of study; and the Society of Arts patronised rising merit largely, expending considerable sums in rewarding talent, and in exciting adventurers in painting, sculpture, and architecture. A person then, with merit such as Romney's, could not be likely to want either patrons or friends. A feeling, which has subsided sadly since, was active then in favour of historical painting; and the love of portraiture was, as it has ever been, strong among all ranks. He set up his easel in Dove Court, near the Mansion House, — (most of the west end of *our* London was as yet country,) — wrote to his wife a letter, still preserved, and beginning with a cold "My dear," to send him the pictures of Lear and Elfrida; and adding to these and others "The Death of David Rizzio," he formed a little exhibition in his humble studio, to which he invited such friends as his talents had been able to procure him. This latter picture, on which the painter set a high value, obtained little notice, and was finally destroyed by the very hands that formed it. I find it described as a work of "extraordinary merit, combining energetic action with strong expression;" and if so, it deserved a better fate. He was more fortunate in his "Death of Wolfe," painted in 1763, which was reckoned worthy of the second prize, of fifty guineas, from the Society of Arts. This must have been a welcome award to one strug-

gling both for money and distinction; but it caused both cavil and remonstrance.

It appears that Mortimer, an artist of fine poetic feeling, exhibited at the same time his picture of "Edward the Confessor seizing the Treasures of his Mother." When the decision of the Society of Arts was announced, there was one at least who considered that Mortimer had been injured, and favour shown to an adventurer and a stranger, who painted in what the classic critics of the day called "the coat and waistcoat style." The remonstrance was made to such purpose that the decision was revised and reversed; the premium was awarded to Mortimer, while Romney was obliged to be content with a present of twenty-five guineas. Cumberland refrains from naming the person who caused the decision to be reversed. Hayley says, "The candid Romney, in relating this very interesting incident of his life to me, completely absolved those judges who gave their final sentence against him. He told me, with that ingenuous spirit which was one of his amiable characteristics, that Reynolds was the person who, with great justice, contended that the second prize was due to Mortimer for his picture of 'Edward the Confessor seizing the Treasures of his Mother;' a picture which Romney most liberally acknowledged to be so strikingly superior to his own 'Death of Wolfe,' that he was far from repining at being obliged to relinquish a prize too hastily assigned to him." The "candid Romney," we may surmise, did not in this instance speak exactly as he felt to his future biographer; at all

events, his son has no inclination to dismiss the business so softly. "Who was the person," he asks, "through whose interference the decree was reversed? — the illustrious Reynolds: and can he be regarded as an impartial judge? What say facts and circumstances? He was too well versed in his profession, and had too shrewd an intellect, not to perceive in the author of that picture a future rival. Let any one look at the portraits painted by Romney at that time, and see whether there was not sufficient ground for jealousy on the part of Reynolds. The principle laid down by Sir Joshua establishes the truth of my observations, 'that it is impossible for two painters in the same department of the art to continue long in friendship with each other.' Mortimer, be it remembered, was no portrait painter, and also dedicated his etchings to the President. I may also mention that not the slightest intercourse at any time subsisted between Reynolds and Romney: this could not at first have arisen from any backwardness on the part of the latter, because he could not but know that the notice of so distinguished an individual would have been of great advantage." To this it may be added, that Northcote represents Garrick as saying of Cumberland,— "He hates you, Sir Joshua, because you do not admire the painter whom he considers as a second Correggio."— "Who is that?" replied Sir Joshua. "Why, his Correggio," answered Garrick, "is Romney." It may be inferred from this, that Reynolds had been speaking disparagingly of Romney to Garrick: one thing is certain — that

thenceforward Reynolds and Romney were enemies.

The vacillating taste of the Society of Arts made some stir; and the stir was all to the advantage of Romney. He moved from his quarters in the city, and established himself near the Mews Gate, Charing Cross; he wished, I suppose, to breathe classic air—Dance and Mortimer resided in Covent Garden; Hogarth and Reynolds, in Leicester Fields. Here he raised the price of his portraits to five guineas; and with such success, that he ere long found his purse heavy enough to carry him to Paris. The enquiries of many anxious sitters, he said, compelled him to take that step:—"Have you ever been in France, Mr. Romney?" asked one; and "Have you ever studied in Rome?" enquired another:—for in those days, even more than now, it was the fashion to deem the skill of no untravelled artist equal to the task of painting an ordinary English head in oils.

Though Romney, up to this period, had seen little of high art, nevertheless he speaks with some boldness concerning that of France. "I was much struck," he says, "with the strange appearance of things, at the first sight, in Paris: the degeneracy of taste that runs through every thing is farther gone here than in London. The ridiculous and fantastical are the only points which they seem to aim at. The paintings of the time of Louis the Fourteenth are very great, and every church and palace is filled with them." From Vernet, the eminent landscape painter, he received much courtesy; and had, through his

kindness, the doors of the Orleans Gallery opened for his use. Little as he esteemed the works of the living artists, he contrived to obtain from them some instruction in the science of his profession; and returned, murmuring but improved, to London. The care with which he had studied the works of Rubens, in the Luxembourg Gallery, was visible in his portrait of Sir Joseph Yates, one of the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, which he painted on his return. This was so successful, that Romney became rather a favourite with the gentlemen of the long robe. "He has certainly," says Hayley, "executed many admirable portraits from illustrious individuals of this profession; a profession which has a tendency, perhaps, to animate with peculiar vivacity the natural eloquence of manly features."

The picture of the "Death of King Edmund," which obtained for Romney the premium of fifty guineas from the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, was so little relished by others, that it could not find a purchaser. So sensitive was the artist on such occasions, that, from vexation at his want of skill, or in scorn of the world's want of discernment, he has been known to cut a composition to pieces, in spite of all entreaty or remonstrance. He contributed some pictures to the Exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists; among which was the portrait of a lady in the character of a saint. This sort of flattery —once so prevalent with painters—is now nearly worn out: we have now no Lady Bettys enacting the part of Diana — no Lady Janes descending as Venus in a cloud of ambrosia — nor Lady

Marys tripping it barefoot among the thorns and brambles of this weary world, in the character of Hebe. We have none now who either "sinner it, or saint it" on canvass: the flattery which the painter has to pay is of a more scientific kind — he has to trust alone to the truth of his drawing, and the harmony of his colours.

As the fame and name of Romney began to rise in the world, his ambition also expanded, and he desired better-spread tables, and more luxurious accommodation. Perhaps, a wish to measure himself with Reynolds caused him to fix his residence in Great Newport Street, within a few doors of the President. Here he had a fine studio, and a well-replenished house: the success of his pencil became visible throughout all his establishment; and London rang from side to side of the prodigy who, in historical works, promised to equal the great masters of Italy — while, in portrait, he seemed to be in a fair way of rivalling Sir Joshua himself. One fortunate work contributed largely to this blaze of success: — a picture of Sir George Warren and his Lady, with a little girl caressing a bull-finch, was so full of nature and tenderness, that all who saw it went away admiring, and spread the praise of the artist far and near.

To the natural question, why Romney chose to send his pictures to the Spring Gardens' Exhibition, and not to the Royal Academy, we have no satisfactory answer. Though one of the most distinguished painters of his day, and a man of great natural courtesy, it so happened, whether through pride on his part, or ill nature

or bad taste on that of others, that he was never even elected an associate of the Royal Academy. In looking over the lists of the academicians of those days, I find some five and twenty, of whom no man has ever heard since; and thirty more, at least, who could have had no right to take precedence of a Romney. Reynolds, it would seem, disliked both the man and his works; and such was the omnipotence of the President, that on whomsoever his evil eye lighted, that person had small chance for the honours of the Academy. Fuseli, too — but that was in a later day — ranked Romney with those whom he called "coat and waistcoat painters;" in short, it is well known that the President, and all who loved to be well with him, had no good will to Romney. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that Romney was equally sensitive and proud — a man easily moved to anger or to love — covetous of approbation, and willing to resent difference of opinion, as a sin at once against himself and pure taste. He was, from all I have heard, a man likely enough to take a sort of pleasure in having it said that he belonged not to the Royal Academy, and witnessing the odium which the President's party incurred by keeping an artist of his talents and fame out of their ranks. However this might be, we know that he lived and died without academic honours; — and we know also, for our comfort, that his name has lost nothing by coming down to posterity untagged with *initials*.

Those who looked with a critical eye upon the works of Romney at this period, dwelt much on

the absence of a sort of classic grace, which, his friends admit, he never excelled in till after he had studied two years in Italy. It must be confessed, indeed, that the painter found more men at that period who were desirous to find fault than to be pleased with what he did; and one of the busiest of this ungentle tribe appears to have been Garrick. That eminent actor, it may be remembered, did what he could to perplex Hogarth, who attempted his portrait; and also succeeded in puzzling Gainsborough, much to the increase of the good humour of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom he related how many changes of face he put on, till the painter declared he was the devil, and threw down his brushes in despair. It happened that Cumberland, the dramatist, conceived a great regard for Romney, and exerted all the influence of tongue and pen to bring him into notice. Through his interest, Mrs. Yates, the accomplished actress, sat to him for his Tragic Muse, — a piece as much below the great work so called of Reynolds, as the personal majesty of Yates was below that of Siddons. Cumberland also endeavoured to propitiate Garrick. "I brought him," says Cumberland, "to see Romney's pictures, hoping to interest him in his favour. A large family piece unluckily arrested his attention: a gentleman in a close-buckled bob-wig, and a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, with his wife and children, (some sitting, some standing,) had taken possession of some yards of canvass, very much, as it appeared, to their own satisfaction — for they were perfectly amused in a contented abstinence from all thought or

action. Upon this unfortunate group when Garrick had fixed his lynx's eyes, he began to put himself into the attitude of the gentleman, and turning to Mr. Romney, 'Upon my word, sir,' said he, 'this is a very regular well-ordered family; and that is a very bright-rubbed mahogany table at which that motherly good lady is sitting; and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is, doubtless, a very excellent subject, (to the state I mean, if these are all his children,) but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it with that success which I hope will attend you.' The modest artist took the hint, as it was meant, in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall." This conduct was abundantly dignified in Mr. David, it must be allowed!

Sallies such as these sunk deep into the mind of Romney: he was extremely sensitive;—a piece of captious criticism, a touch of smart wit, or even a little humorous raillery, damped and disconcerted him, and paralysed his hand in whatever he was engaged on. There are, indeed, at all times ten to sneer at the efforts of genius for one to applaud. Amongst the former was a Captain Dalton, a gentleman skilful in the unamiable art of turning every thing into burlesque. It happened that this worthy was sitting for his portrait, when fixing his eyes on the "Initiation of a Virgin into the Mysteries of Bacchus," in which a number of females were engaged, he gave such a ludicrous and unchaste turn to the composition, that Romney was induced to lay the picture aside for ever. "A painter," says the artist's son,

" should be cautious what kind of persons he admits into his private study. There are three sorts of people whom he should particularly exclude: the humourist, who catches at every idea he can distort and make ridiculous; the coarse unfeeling caviller, who ruffles and discourages diffident genius; and the indiscriminating flatterer, who, though he cannot impose upon the judgment of a man of sense, yet, by the constant incense of his fulsome compliments, may so far vitiate his feelings as to render him less capable of bearing the judicious suggestions of liberal and enlightened criticism."

Romney, however, was not without consolation amidst all these distresses. No artist of that day was more berhymed or bepraised. Nameless bards led the way, and their betters followed, with epistles melodious and long. One of the former was a versifier of the name of Cockin, who contrived, in a purposed panegyric of many lines, to squeeze the praise of his friend within the limits of a parenthesis: —

> (Thy nicest knowledge of the impassioned face —
> Conceptions true of dignity and grace —
> Colours from beauteous nature clear and chaste —
> A flowing pencil, industry, and taste.)"

These verses were called forth by two fine pieces of " Melancholy " and " Mirth:" and the same productions brought a letter from Cumberland. The painter had embodied the descriptions of the Allegro and the Penseroso of Milton, and intended to name the pictures after those exquisite poems. This, it seems, was liable to criticism. " In the first place," says the

dramatist, "the titles are not classical; they are modern, barbarous, and affected. They are borrowed from poetry — and by bringing Milton's descriptions to our minds, they rob your ideas of their originality. Sir, let the poets wait upon you, and give your figures their natural titles in their own language, or in established classical terms. The solemn figure is strictly that of the Muse Melpomene, and Reynolds has led the way in calling the other Euphrosyne: I think I should render those into English by the titles of Meditation and Mirth." The painters of those and later days seem to have been frequently inclined to run races with one another. Romney chose similar subjects with Reynolds; Barry did the same for West; Opie anticipated Grahame in his Death of David Rizzio; Reynolds said he wished to show legs with Ramsay's Lord Bute; there were three or four Deaths of Wolfe; there were two Tragic Muses, two Goddesses of Mirth, and Satans without number. The list might be extended. It is but justice, however, to say, that Romney's Mrs. Yates, as the Tragic Muse, was painted before the far-famed Siddons of Reynolds.

Romney was now thirty-nine years old: he had overcome the disadvantages of provincial obscurity; and notwithstanding many blemishes, of which a certain air of heaviness was not the least, his works had impressed the public with a very favourable notion of his genius. His pockets were filled by the lucrative business of portraiture; and his fame was established in the first ranks of British talent, by his historical and poetic works. Ambition, however, is the restless spur of genius:

he had within him the feeling that the works which his friends most lavishly praised were far from being worthy of his powers, and resolved to devote two years to study in Rome, that he might master the secrets of the mighty men of old, and give himself a fair chance of achieving a place beside them in the eternal temple of fame. All artists, indeed, are taught to believe that the way to perfection lies through the Sistine Chapel, and that they have only to inhale the air of Italy to become as inspired as Michael Angelo or Raphael. No Mussulman accounts himself worthy of paradise till he has kissed the black stone at Mecca; and no artist conceives he can claim rank with the great masters till he has worshipped in the Vatican. This was eagerly pressed upon Romney, both in prose and in verse: and, setting aside the nobler aspirations of his own unsatisfied ambition, he knew the world well enough to be aware that two years' study abroad would be set down to the credit of his talents; and that, whether he really profited by his travels or not, he would be hailed, on his return, as one improved in classic purity and grace. Thus stimulated from within and from without, our artist left his studio, and an income of twelve hundred a year; and with a letter of introduction from the Duke of Richmond to the Pope in his pocket, and Humphrey the miniature painter for a companion, set sail for Italy on the 20th of March, 1773.

His departure was celebrated in verse by his friend Richard Cumberland; who, observing that the strains of very indifferent bards in praise of Romney were not unwelcome, taxed his own

Muse, long accustomed to write according to the dictation of play actors, and produced, on this great occasion, a piece which might have been easily written by a man of less reputation. He describes Painting as a lady ever young and blooming, and lavish of her affections — makes hasty mention of her flirtations, in days of old, with the dark masters — and then, attiring her as ladies were attired in the year of grace 1773, leads her at once into the studio of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The President, after a sitting or two, invites his brethren of the pencil to woo her and win her. Who were the great in art in those days, the poet obligingly informs us —

> See Coates, see Dance, see Gainsborough seize the spoil;
> And ready Mortimer, who laughs at toil;
> Crown'd with fresh roses, graceful Humphrey stands,
> While beauty grows immortal from his hands.
> Stubbes like a lion springs upon his prey;
> Next bold eccentric Wright, who hates the day;
> Familiar Zoffani, with comic art;
> And West, great painter of the human heart.

Of the success of Gainsborough, Mortimer, and West, to win this damsel's favour, all have heard. Dance thought gold and silver had a more radiant complexion, and wooed and wedded a lady, called, in the fashionable lists of the day, "The Yorkshire Fortune," Mrs. Drummer, with eighteen thousand a year. Romney, a willing but a timid candidate, makes at last his appearance —

> No wild ambition swells his temperate heart,
> Himself as pure and patient as his art;
> A blushing, backward candidate for fame;
> At once his country's honour and her shame.

> Roused then at length, with honest pride inspired,
> Romney, advance! be known and be admired.

The roar of the ocean deafened the ear of the painter to the flattery and melody of numbers such as these. He hastened towards Italy through France; nor did the rapidity of his journey prevent him making observations on art, on agriculture, and on the people.

"We were much pleased," he says, "with the dress of the lower order of women at Avignon. Their heads were dressed with cambric or muslin; a cap, with a plain border round the face, which projected very forward all about, and a kind of cambric handkerchief which tied under the chin, and covered the whole head in a very picturesque manner. Their faces are much browner than at Paris, which makes their linen look very white, and gives the whole head a very beautiful effect. They wear little jackets of different colours, but principally black, without stays; and a handkerchief round the neck of coloured silk or muslin that covers most of it, and meets between the breasts. Their petticoats are of a different colour from that of their jackets; and reach a little below their knees, which gives them a very light and airy appearance, and exposes limbs round and cleanly formed. This may be supposed to be very delightful to the eye of a painter, who had always been accustomed to see women dressed in stays with petticoats almost covering their heels. — The Genoese women," he says in the continuation of his journal, "are in general elegant in their figure; have great ease in their action, and walk extremely well.

They are of a good size; are fair, but very pale, which is occasioned by the dress they wear. It is a loose robe of calico or thick muslin, which goes over their heads like a veil, and over their shoulders and arms like a capuchin. They let it fall over the forehead as low as the eyebrows, and twist it under the chin: they generally have one hand up almost to the chin, holding the veil with their fingers beautifully disposed among the folds, and the other across the breast. They are short-waisted, and have very long trains, which produce the most elegant flowing lines imaginable; so that with the beautiful folds of the veil or cloak, they are, when they move, the finest figures that can be conceived. When the veil is off, you see the most picturesque and elegant hair; it is braided up the back of the head and twisted round several times, and beautifully varied; it is pinned with a long silver pin." These two national pictures, by the hand of a skilful and observing man, are more valuable than a lecture on grace and proportion. They may be studied profitably by all artists, who desire to attain excellence through the inspiration of living nature.

From Genoa, Romney proceeded to Leghorn by sea. The felucca to which he intrusted himself encountered a violent storm in the Gulf of Pisa: the danger was great — the crew alarmed — the painter sat silent but in evident consternation. When, however, calmer weather came, and Romney was rallied on his gravity, "he protested," says Hayley, "that it did not arise from personal fear, but from tender concern at being separated for ever from his friends and relations."

The sailors, meantime, had ascribed their peril to the knowledge which the saints had obtained that a heretic was on board, and believed that earnest prayers rather than good seamanship saved them. To drown an artist who loved his friends so well, would, no doubt, have been cruel in the saint who rules in the Gulf of Pisa. Romney, however, vowed he would go no more by sea where land would serve the turn, and taking his route by Florence, on the 18th of June arrived in the "eternal city."

The history of a man who devotes himself to continual study can only be told by himself; it is by the works of genius he successively offers to the world that the epochs of his life are marked. Of the employment of Romney in Rome little has been related. "In the memoranda," says Hayley, "which my friend desired me to preserve as the foundation for a history of his professional pursuits, it surprises me to find no list of the works which he executed at Rome. The ardour and activity of Romney at this period of his life were so great and incessant, that I am persuaded he must have executed many drawings and paintings during that residence. He devoted himself to intense and sequestered study. Such was the cautious reserve which his singular mental infirmity—a perpetual dread of enemies—inspired, that he avoided all further intercourse with his fellow-traveller, and with all the other artists of his country who were then studying at Rome." The latter part of this assertion seems incredible. There arose, indeed, a coldness between him and his fellow-traveller, Humphrey, who was a

gossip and an idler; and he had, at all times, a rooted aversion to unprofitable companions. But he acquired several friends during his stay in Rome, which in all extended to nineteen months; and his son assures us that he never perceived that dread of enemies upon him of which the poet speaks. If Romney ever made such a statement to Hayley, he must have done so for the sake of effect; and, to be sure, the man who could say that he meditated the leaving of his wife almost as soon as the marriage knot was tied, that he might study and become distinguished, might be capable enough of wishing it to be believed that in pursuit of fame he had quarrelled with his friends and shut himself up from the world.

His Roman seclusion admits, however, of other explanation. Though Romney raised a scaffold to copy paintings in the Vatican, and worshipped, as Reynolds had done before, the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo, his chief study was in the living school. The art of Britain has never been able to profit by the beauty which Britain contains. There is a reluctance, not affected but real, on the part of the humblest of our females to display their charms for the furtherance of art. Neither affection nor gold has yet persuaded them out of this coy shamefacedness — but it is otherwise in Italy: there the love of art is deeper, or the sense of shame less; and ladies even of rank, — princesses indeed, — are not reluctant to give art permission to adorn itself with fresh graces imitated from their persons. To a complaisant saint

of the softer sex Romney dedicated much of his time, and familiarised himself with an image of beauty living and breathing before him. From this woman he made many sketches and only one picture. But that picture is of great beauty: "it represents," says the painter's son, "a naked female in the character of a wood nymph, reposing at full length upon the ground, with her back turned towards the spectator. The fore part of her body is raised, and resting upon her right arm and elbow; and she is contemplating the reflection of her beautiful face in a brook. She lies upon a drapery of white linen and a pink robe, which gives a rich warmth of colouring to the whole. The back ground is a wild forest. This picture came into the possession of Mr. Keate, the surgeon, for an inadequate price. Mr. Romney began a half-length portrait of Mrs. Keate, and received in payment for it forty guineas; but the portrait, from some cause or other, was never finished, and Mr. Keate requested this picture in its stead. The wood nymph was, in my estimation, cheap at two hundred guineas; but it was not the fashion in those days to buy fancy pictures." Nor is it much the fashion yet—fancy is going out as utility comes in; her choicest efforts are at a sad discount in the great market of art as well as of literature.

Another of Romney's Roman works was not so successful. He had the audacity to attempt to paint a picture of Almighty God, and failed where no man could succeed. Under the title of "Providence brooding over Chaos," there appeared neither more nor less than a venerable

man floating, with a long beard, and outspread arms, on a cloud, with abundance of darkness and obscurity below. When, years afterwards, Lord George Gordon and his mob were purging the Catholic chapels, and plundering the houses of opulent professors of that religion, Romney became alarmed lest they should mistake his "Providence brooding over Chaos" for some idolatrous object of devotion, and so pillage his establishment: it was, therefore, removed to a back apartment. Long afterwards, at the sale of his pictures, it was knocked down by the auctioneer's hammer under the name of Jupiter Pluvius, — a good selling name with classical men.

There appears no evidence, either in the shape of sketches or of paintings, to support the notion of Hayley, that Romney owed those infirmities which overclouded the evening of his day to his indulgence, while in Italy, in that honourable, yet perilous, kind of intemperance — intemperance of study.

Romney happened to lodge in the Jesuits' College at Rome, when that order incurred the suspicion of the Pope; and one morning, as a number of arrests were made, he walked forth among the armed sentinels stationed at the doors. The painter, it seems, was in a sort of reverie, from which he was roused by a soldier bringing down his musket suddenly, and levelling the tube directly at his head. The intimidated artist had the presence of mind to call out, "English, English!" The soldier's brow cleared up; he raised his musket, and bade him go on. At Venice he met with an adventure of another

kind. The learned and whimsical Wortley Montagu was living there, in the manners, and habit, and magnificence, of a Turk. Romney conceived a sudden regard for this picturesque personage drew an admirable head of him, in his Eastern garb; and, willing to show all respect to the city where he sojourned, coloured and finished it in the style of the great Venetian masters, with a success which surprised many. The painter and the traveller held many conversations; and a mutual regard was growing up, when one day as Montagu was eating a small bird, a sharp bone stuck in his throat, which produced instant inflammation, and, on the third day, death. The Earl of Warwick bought this portrait for fifty guineas. He copied it also in crayons, that he might try to fix that fugitive manner of painting; and in this he succeeded so well, by an elaborate mode of glazing, that "he produced," says his son, "a clearness and brilliancy of colouring, hardly equalled in the finest Venetian pictures. Hayley erroneously calls this the original picture, which, he says, was presented to a friend. This friend was the mother of Thomas Hayley, who asked Mr. Romney for it; prompted, I have no doubt, by Mr. Hayley, who availed himself of every means to get possession of such pictures as he set his mind upon."

Having stored his portfolios with images of Italian beauty, and acquired, as he imagined, a deep insight into the long-concealed mysteries of colour, as well as the principles of composition, he took the road for England, and arrived in London on the 1st of June, 1775. His return

was announced by the benevolent Muse of Cumberland, in strains flattering and friendly; and he had no reason to suppose that he was either forgotten or neglected. Sitters, titled and untitled, flocked to his studio, and persons of taste looked in to see how far Italy had inspired him. The Duke of Richmond, one of the most effectual patrons of art in those days, desired to sit for his portrait; and the name of Romney was again heard pronounced in the same breath with that of Reynolds. Two works, of no ordinary worth are ascribed to this period: the first of these was of a domestic nature, and in some measure a portrait, as the head was imitated from the daughter of Guy, a surgeon in Chichester. "It was," says the artist's son, "one of the loveliest things I ever saw; it was truly angelic. It represented a young female

> With looks commercing with the skies,
> Her rapt soul sitting in her eyes.

It was a sight sufficient to inspire the beholder with sentiments of religious sympathy; it was a visible illustration of piety — a sermon addressed to the eyes: it was equal to Guido in grace, and superior in expression. Her long flowing hair floating loosely over her shoulders, her head encircled with a small blue fillet, and her soft blue eyes, all contributed to sanctify the character." This was one of those pictures which Hayley condescended to like, and the painter presented it to his son; it was, after the poet's death, disposed of by auction. The other piece I alluded to was designed to be in the style

of Correggio, whom Romney passionately admired. The subject was from that passage in the Tempest, where Miranda says, "Beseech you, father;" and Prospero exclaims, "Hence! hang not on my garments." There is much dignity, and an assumed austerity, in Prospero; while Miranda is most bewitching and lovely. She gazes with admiration and growing tenderness on Ferdinand; her hair is loosely braided, but is too redundant to be restrained, and floats on the air; the gentle Ariel is in his ministry near, and a troop of shadowy nymphs are dancing on the "yellow sands." It was the painter's custom, when a sitter disappointed him, to take up a waste canvass and make sketches of historical works. Of these he made many, and some of them he expanded into full size paintings. When he had studied till he mastered the conception and detail of his subject, he dashed it rapidly out on the canvass. He could make a sketch fit to work from in the course of an hour, in which, says his son, the effect of light and shade, the harmony of colouring, the composition of the figures, and even the drawing and expression, would be given at once as it were by magic. He sometimes painted directly from invention, but never with a copy before him: for he never made a finished drawing for a picture. West, on the contrary, used to finish his drawings minutely; and his great pictures, being copied from them, lost much of their original freedom by this process of imitation.

Soon after his return from Rome, the death of Coates, an academician, vacated a spacious house

in Cavendish Square, and there Romney resolved to establish himself. This mansion continues to be memorable: it is at this day the residence of a painter and poet, a scholar and gentleman — Sir Martin Archer Shee. "It was at Christmas, in the year 1775," says Hayley, "that Romney took possession of this memorable residence. He was then in the very prime of life; his health had been improved, and his mind enriched by two years' foreign study; and he had the active good wishes of several friends in his favour: yet, in his singular constitution, there was so much nervous timidity united to great bodily strength, and to enterprising and indefatigable ambition, that he used to tremble when he waked every morning in his new habitation, with a painful apprehension of not finding business sufficient to support him. These fears were only early flutterings of that hypochondriacal disorder which preyed in secret on his comfort during many years; and which, though apparently subdued by the cheering exhortations of friendship and great professional prosperity, failed not to show itself more formidably when he was exhausted by labour in the decline of life."

Those who are unacquainted with the history of Romney will, doubtless, now be looking for the appearance of his wife at the head of his house. He has obtained fame and opulence; has a residence not unworthy of the first of the land; his table is well furnished; and all that he desired to find, when he left her lonely with thirty pounds in his pocket, he has more than found. It is, however, not more strange than true, that, from

the moment Romney sets his foot in London, his wife is forgotten by himself and by his biographers: there is no impeachment against her character, or even her manners; yet so it is — she is left pining and solitary, unknown to the world, and to every appearance utterly and entirely neglected by the now flourishing man who, in youth and poverty, had vowed to love and cherish her. This is a sore blemish in the character of Romney, and, I have no doubt, his own sense of this was the chief cause of those fits of gloom and melancholy which darkened his declining years. He erred at the outset, in not calling her to London the moment that success dawned upon him; he erred again in not introducing himself as a married man, when the company he kept required him in honour to make the avowal; and he erred, without hope of retrieving his character, when he neglected to give the keys of his house in Cavendish Square to her who deserved much more than that reparation. No good reason whatever has been assigned for this cruel and most unmanly conduct.

Romney probably considered the friendship of Hayley, which about this time he acquired, as a compensation for domestic solitude. Both the feeble over-rated poet and his favourite painter seem to have rejoiced at this propitious occurrence; and mutual flattery grew more and more the bond of their union. The artist's son, however, appears never to have liked this intimacy. These are his words:—"The influence which the friendship of Hayley exercised over the life of Romney was, in many respects, injurious. His

friendship was grounded on selfishness, and the means by which he maintained it was flattery. He was able also, by a canting kind of hypocrisy, to confound the distinctions between vice and virtue, and to give a colouring to conduct that might, and probably did, mislead Romney on some occasions. He drew him too much from general society, and almost monopolised him to himself, and thus narrowed the circle of his acquaintance and friends. By having intimated an intention of writing Romney's life, he made him extremely afraid of doing any thing that might give offence. He was always interfering in his affairs — volunteering his advice; and I have much reason to believe, that whatever errors the latter may have committed, they were mainly owing to the counsel or instigation of Hayley." These are strong expressions — too strong, perhaps, for a biographer to use, who can only support them by the fact that on one occasion, when Meyer wished Romney to exhibit his pictures at the Royal Academy, in order that he might be proposed as a member of that body, the officious sonnetteer dissuaded him from pressing the matter, because of the *mental peculiarities* of the painter.

The money and the time laid out by Romney in bettering his skill and taste were now to be more than repaid. The poetic commendations of his friends, "if they did not," as Gibbon said, "contribute much to his professional prosperity, might be justly called an elegant advertisement of his merit," and were therefore useful; while the titled and the learned saw, or imagined they

saw, such a striking improvement in the conception and handling of his works, that one of them exclaimed, "His manner of painting is raised beyond measure by his studies in Italy; his pictures, instead of being cold and heavy, are warm, tender, light, and beautiful." So much did his commissions, as orders for pictures are called, amount to, and so loudly was his fame announced, that Reynolds began to believe that the town were in earnest when they said he had lost the half of his empire to Romney. There were not wanting go-betweens; — friends, good-natured and candid, who filled the ears of these eminent men with idle sayings and foolish rumours, and thus inoculated an honourable rivalry with much of the bitterness of personal dislike. Lord Thurlow, it seems, had said, in his ironical way "There are two factions in art — and I am of the Romney faction;" and this careless expression was bandied about to the sore annoyance of Reynolds. Nay, so precarious is fame, that for several years Romney had manifestly the ascendency in the scale of popular opinion; and the President had to soothe himself with the belief that the day would come when men's eyes would be opened, and the grave and quiet grandeur of his works would triumph. In these times of bitterness and feud, when Sir Joshua, in the course of conversation, was compelled to speak of his rival, he merely indicated him by saying, "The man in Cavendish Square."

A list of all the works which Romney executed in those busy days would occupy several pages; it would, however, be absurd to specify

many of them, since they can possess little interest except for particular families. I shall mention such pictures as are remarkable for containing more than one figure, or for their superior merit, or on account of the character and station of the individuals represented: — 1. The children of Earl Gower (now Marquess of Stafford), a large picture, representing three young ladies, with a little boy dancing, and the eldest daughter playing on the tambourine: this is a masterly and graceful work. 2. The late Duchess of Gordon, with her son, then Marquess of Huntley. 3. The Countess of Albemarle and her son, Lord Albemarle, with dogs. 4. The children of Lord Elcho (now Earl of Wemyss). 5. The Beaumont family, of Whitby-Beaumont, near Wakefield: a large picture, representing four brothers and a sister contemplating the portrait of a deceased brother. 6. Mrs. Prescott and three children. 7. Master and Miss Clavering, with dogs: Miss Clavering is caressing a pup in her bosom, and her brother holds two spaniels in a string, one of which is leaping up to claim the pup. This is a fine, natural, and elegant composition; the colouring is vivid, and the grouping perfect. "Would," exclaims the son of the artist, "that a few such pictures as this" (and there are many such) "were placed in the British Institution, that Romney might have a fair chance with Reynolds." 8. Master and Miss Cornwall, children of Sir George Cornwall, Bart. 9. Sir James Harris, three quarters. 10. Lady Harris and Miss Harris. 11. Sir Hyde Parker, a whole length, and not unworthy of being placed by the side of the cele-

brated Keppel of Sir Joshua. 12. Lady Elizabeth Compton, afterwards Lady George Cavendish. 13. An Indian Chief. 14. Lady Craven, ordered by Horace Walpole. 15. Colonel Johnes of Hafod and his friends: a large picture, with Mrs. Johnes introduced as a fortune-teller. 16. Miss C. and Miss Hester Grenville, daughters of the Hon. Mr. Grenville. 17. Lord Stanley and Lady Charlotte. 18. Mrs. Bracebridge and child — a whole length and recumbent. This list, purposely imperfect as it is, proves the popularity of Romney. In one of these lucky and prosperous years he earned, by portraiture alone, some three thousand six hundred pounds.

Hayley now began to be afraid lest the spirit of ambition and labour, which he believed his own verses had awakened in Romney, would be crushed like the flower beneath the furrow's weight; and imagined he stood in need of a frank and faithful monitor to guard him against those excesses of impetuous and undisciplined imagination, which often lead the fervent votaries of fame to destroy their own powers by intemperance of study. "I entreat you," cries this fantastic Mentor, "in the name of those immortal powers, the beautiful and the sublime, whom you so ardently adore — or, to speak the language of your favourite Macbeth, 'I conjure you by that which you profess,' to moderate that intense spirit of application, which preys so fatally on your frame: exchange for a short time the noxious air of London for the cheerful tranquillity and pure breezes of our southern coast." To this summons, in the vein of Ancient Pistol,

the painter replied by wiping his brushes, mounting the coach, and proceeding to Eartham, at that period, and for long after, the residence of Hayley. It would appear, however, that the poet had no desire to let the genius of his guest run to waste in the wilds of Sussex; he invited him from profitable work in London, only that he might tax his strength for the gratification of his own vanity in the country. "Whenever Romney was my guest," says the author of the "Triumphs of Temper," "I was glad to put aside *my own immediate occupation* for the pleasure of searching for and presenting to him a copious choice of such subjects as might happily exercise his powers. I have often blamed myself for not preserving some memoranda of the infinite number of sketches that my active and rapid friend used to make on his visits: several were on canvass in colours; but the greater number were executed very hastily, on paper with a pen." Some of the happiest of these the artist laid apart to form the ground-work of future pictures which he never found leisure to accomplish; but the greater portion were thrown aside, and never thought of more.

About this time, however, Romney found leisure to make some really noticeable excursions into the regions of history and fiction. One of these was a cartoon in black chalk, representing a Lapland witch gazing on the sea from a headland, and enjoying the distress of mariners in a tempest of her own creation. The beauty of the female form and face was preserved, while the whole expression was sublimely malignant.

Another favourite subject was the heroic humanity of that Woltemad mentioned by Thunberg the traveller, who, on horseback, rushed repeatedly into a stormy sea at the Cape of Good Hope, and saved the lives of many men and women during a shipwreck. The scene is wild and touching. He desired, too, to paint the benevolent Howard bringing mercy and loving-kindness into the prison-dungeons of Europe. That illustrious man had just arrived from a journey to Holland, when he was seen by Hayley, attired in a sort of travelling garment made in Saxony. The poet, who was a bit of an actor, and moreover desired much to be seen, though in borrowed light, went up to him and exclaimed, "This is the robe in which you should be painted by Romney; I will implore the favour on my knees, if you will let me take you in this very picturesque habiliment to my friend in Cavendish Square."—"Oh, fie!" said Howard, on seeing the poet on his knees, — "oh, fie! sir; *I* did not kneel to the emperor."—"And, I assure you," said the supplicant, "I would never kneel to you if you were not above an emperor in my estimation." The philanthropist was inexorable respecting his own person, but mentioned several scenes which he had witnessed, and which he thought worthy of being embodied in lasting colours.

The memory of Lord Thurlow was richly stored with sublime, pathetic, and picturesque passages from the ancient poets, and he often expatiated to Romney on the excellence of such subjects for the pencil. He pointed out the Orpheus and Eurydice of Virgil; desired it to be

painted in large for himself, and even took the trouble of translating the passage into harmonious prose. The notions of the great judge and those of the painter were, however, singularly at variance concerning the proper mode of handling the subject: the former seemed desirous of exacting from art a representation of passing emotions; an embodiment of words which, like the last sobs of the goddess that came bubbling up in the lake wherein she disappeared, were beyond the power of colours.

Romney found a more tractable, if not a more reasonable, patron in Hayley, who succeeded in persuading him to paint the Serena of his "Triumphs of Temper." There was, as we may suppose, much effusion of verse ere this was accomplished; and if the painter's success equalled his poet's praise, the work was a happy one.

"He has imparted to the ideal fair
Yet more than beauty's bloom, and youth's attractive air;
For in his studious Nymph the enamour'd eye
May through her breast her gentle heart descry,
See the fond thoughts that o'er her fancy roll,
And sympathy's soft swell that fills her soul."

Romney was one of those artists so happily described by the poet,

"Fond to begin, but for to finish loth."

Much of the prime of his life was squandered in designing and sketching works of an historical nature, which, having merely indicated them on the canvass, he touched no more. Little encouragement was, indeed, given to poetic works at that period; and Romney had been obliged to destroy, for want of house-room, some of his

larger paintings. Enthusiasm will be damped at last, when work after work of genius and fancy has been shown to the world in vain: public neglect, when persisted in, destroys confidence and even lessens power: a man will never work better than when the shouts of the multitude are ringing in his ears; and he will lose a little of his own esteem, when he finds he is losing that of others. It is much to be regretted that Romney allowed the first heat of his fancy to cool before he rendered some of his fine sketches and designs worthy of taking rank as works of art. The world has been a sad loser in consequence of the multitudes of noteless, nameless faces which it sent to the painter's easel, to the continual interruption of his historic productions.

Other causes than the crowding of sitters may, however, be assigned for the number of fine paintings which stood in his studio unfinished. Richly as his mind was stored with images of beauty, and greatly as he admired children, his fancy frequently failed him; and if the model, which he procured to supply the deficiency, happened not to come to appointment, he was inconsolable, and often threw his picture aside, never to resume it. When he painted "Tragedy and Comedy nursing Shakspeare," "The Infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions," and "The Alope,"—in all of which a naked infant was introduced,—he had for a model a fine child belonging to a soldier of the Guards. It happened that the child sickened and died whilst these pictures were in progress; and on that account they were never finished. His group of "Children in a Boat drifted out to Sea"

was left incomplete from the same cause, — a work of much promise, combining landscape with human feeling. His "Shepherd Boy asleep, watched by his Dog at the Approach of a Thunder-storm," — a natural subject, and such as Gainsborough excelled in, — was laid aside because his errand-boy, who served as a model, had to be dismissed for misconduct. Another picture, "The Girl mourning over her Fawn just killed by Lightning," was tossed into the corner, when in a very forward state, for want of a fawn to work from. Hayley was charmed with this picture, and carried it off as it was. "The Milkpail overturned by a She-goat anxious to approach its Kid, which a Milk-girl is fondling," a happy and clever thing, was also left incomplete for want of a suitable goat; and the picture of "Nature unveiling herself to Shakspeare" remained half done, in spite of the eulogium of Helen Maria Williams, —

> "The partial nymph unveil'd her awful face,
> And bade his colours clear her features trace."

"I could enumerate many other unfinished fancy pieces," says the Rev. John Romney, "in all stages of progress, which from divers impeding causes were suffered to accumulate in every corner of the house: no picture, however, was set aside from any difficulty in the art itself. I could mention several causes which contributed to produce these vast heaps of unfinished portraits that obstructed the passage to his gallery. The chief were the poverty or the meanness of the parties to whom the pictures belonged. I have known ladies' portraits, amounting in value to a thousand guineas, remain unfinished for

many months for want of a model with fine hands and arms. Some portraits were abandoned in consequence of crim. con., but more frequently a less flagrant vice led to the same result: it was no uncommon circumstance, that a *chère amie* having been brought to sit for her portrait, both she and picture were deserted before the latter was finished. In cases of this kind, I should recommend to painters to insist upon full payment at the first sitting; unless, indeed, the extraordinary beauty of the female should stamp a value upon the picture equal to the sitting price."

Of the painter's prices and modes of study we have information from his biographers, with all of whom he lived in terms of close intimacy. In the year 1785, a regular account of his sitters was kept by Robinson, one of his pupils: the earnings of the pencil amounted to 3635*l.* The charge for a head had gradually arisen from two guineas to twenty; a kit-cat, from three guineas to thirty; a half length, from four guineas to forty; what is called a half whole length, from five guineas to sixty; and a whole length, from six guineas to eighty. He was fond of painting by lamp-light, but wore a shade to obstruct the direct glare. When tired of this, he amused himself by making designs in chalks, sometimes as large as life—more frequently of the size of his portfolio —on which he wrought till bed-time. "He mostly," says his son, "painted a gentleman's three quarters portrait in three or four sittings; especially if no hands were introduced. The first sitting was three quarters of an hour; the others,

about an hour and a half each. During the spring months he frequently had five sitters a day, and occasionally even six. The only time he had for fancy subjects was in the intervals between the sitters, or when they disappointed him; and, having a canvass at hand, he often regarded such a disappointment as a school-boy would a holiday. He often wrought thirteen hours a day, commencing at eight or earlier, and, except when engaged out, which was not frequently, prolonging his application till eleven at night." Of the wear and tear, mental and bodily, of such close application, the artist was not unconscious; yet he enjoyed the company of the elegant, or the beautiful, and acknowledged that its absence would be felt. "My health," he thus writes in after life, "is not at all constant; my nerves give way; and I have no time to go in quest of pleasure, to prevent a decline of health. My hands are full, and I shall be forced to refuse new faces at last, to be enabled to finish the numbers I have in an unfinished state. I shall regret the necessity of forbearing to take new faces: there is a delight in novelty greater than in the profit gained by sending them home finished: but it must be done." He was fond of painting the portraits of distinguished men, and of his intimate friends, and on such occasions exerted himself more zealously than when he had mere profit in view. He was accounted liberal and generous; one who knew the value of money, indeed, but reckoned it secondary to friendship and fame.

To recruit his exhausted powers, Romney now

retired annually for a summer month or so to the residence of Hayley at Eartham. Here he supped full with flattery, served up in prose as well as verse. Lifting the curtain of this little stage, we find ourselves in the midst of a select coterie of poets, poetesses, painters, and wits, —Hayley himself, Miss Seward, Charlotte Smith, Eliza Heron, Romney, and Cowper, besides others with or without name, not less willing to admire the liberality of their entertainer, and all on marvellous good terms with themselves and with each other. Cowper sat once for his portrait; and rewarded the artist for a very admirable work, which secures to posterity the looks of one of the great heirs of fame, by a sonnet, which weighs in the balance like current gold, when compared to the glittering Birmingham ware with which the rest of the circle were used to pay him —

" Romney! expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvass, not the form alone
And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face,
With strokes that Time ought never to erase —
Thou hast so pencill'd mine; and though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace:
But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear:
Well, I am satisfied, it should be so;
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear:
For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?"

This coterie, among but not of whom was sometimes Cowper, lived in —I might say *upon* — the mutual interchange of the most ludicrous

flattery. When they gathered together at the breakfast table, the ordinary greetings were Sappho, and Pindar, and Raphael; they asked for bread and butter in quotations, and "still their speech was song." They then separated for some hours: poetasters, male and female, retired, big with undelivered verse; and Romney proceeded to sketch from the lines of Hayley, or make designs as he had suggested. When the hour appointed for taking the air came, the painter went softly to the door of the poetess — opened it gently, and if he found her

'With looks all staring from Parnassian dreams,"

he shut it and retreated: if, on the contrary, she was unemployed, he said, "Come, Muse;" and she answered, "Coming, Raphael;" and so the time flew by. Romney, on hearing Miss Seward speak affectionately of her father, painted her portrait, and desired it might be given to the parent she loved so much. The poetess was eager, in concert with Hayley, to make some return; and truly the painter must have been a simple man if he failed to be astonished with the result of their joint efforts. Of the eighty and eight lines called "Coming to Eartham" and "Leaving Eartham," there are only two which have reference to the subject, and full fifty-six which refer to no subject at all. They are big with Eolus, Orion, Muse, Boreas, Auster, Zephyr, Eurus,—(I take them down as they come) — Famine, and Ceres. It happened to rain when the poetess of Lichfield arrived, and hence all these demons of tempest and storm. On the

buted most towards it. Romney, it would appear, soon cooled; indeed, the fever in which he commenced his undertakings seldom lasted long: but here, in addition to his natural infirmity of fickleness, he was stung by hearing of a thousand guineas given to Reynolds for Macbeth, and another thousand which West had for King Lear, while six hundred had been thought enough for his own picture from "The Tempest." Another cause assigned for his early coolness was, the discovery which he made that the Boydells were converting it into a commercial speculation. On this point the Rev. John Romney says,—"Nichol, by since claiming the merit of having been the first to propose this scheme, has been guilty of a misrepresentation: he might, however, have pleaded a secondary claim; for, being sufficiently alive to the interests of his own profession, but devoid of all feeling for the art of painting, he proposed, as an improvement, that it should be accompanied with a splendid edition of the plays, decorated with prints from the pictures, which, corresponding also with the views of the Boydells as print-sellers, was in like manner approved by the party."

In the history of art, Britain claims the honourable distinction of having produced two galleries of paintings from two of her noblest poets; and it must not be omitted, that, numerous and valuable as those works are, they were projected and completed without other patronage than the individual generosity or enthusiasm of a few members of the Royal Academy, and some spirited tradesmen. For the Shakspeare Gallery, Romney painted two pictures; viz.

"The Tempest," and "The Infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions." The first of these has been already mentioned; but it suffered a sad change before it passed to the Boydells. The original picture represented Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban, with a shipwreck in the background. Some pretender to taste declared the composition was not strictly historical, as it consisted only of three figures. Romney, either from deference to that person's judgment, or from a belief that he could improve the picture, brought the shipwreck into the foreground, and expelled Caliban. To alter a work of genius is a dangerous experiment: he toiled and toiled in vain to work it up into proper grandeur and consistency; and though there is no deficiency in grouping and character, he never ceased to regret that he had deserted his original design. There were other five subjects which he sketched for the same collection, but did not execute, viz. "The Banquet," and "The Cavern Scene," in Macbeth; "Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page;" "Bolingbroke and Margery Jourdain conjuring up the Fiend;" and "The Maid of Orleans." He perceived, he said, that the Boydells wished to employ the elder painters no farther than was sufficient to give an impulse to the undertaking, and then complete it with works from young artists at low prices. In consequence he directed his attention to other objects, "regretting that disinterestedness and liberality were qualities little appreciated among dealers and speculators." These are haughty words. If Romney imagined that he had only to paint, and the Boydells only to pay, he took

a selfish view of the situation of those worthy and generous men. They were tradesmen, and high-minded ones, and never for a moment assumed the airs of patrons of art, farther than their extensive dealings as print-sellers enabled them to aid it. Under any circumstances it was not unnatural to desire to gain rather than lose by speculations which supported art, and put money into the pockets of painters.

Of those poetic works of Romney much was said at the time, and not a little written; and critics were not wanting who questioned his intimacy with Shakspeare, if they did not doubt his talents. Among the latter was Lord Thurlow, a nobleman who alternately displayed the most refined courtesy and kindliness of manner, and a caustic spleen and rough asperity which made him dreaded as much as he was loved. In one of his rougher moods Thurlow said, "Romney, before you paint Shakspeare, do for God's sake read him."—"A good advice," says Hayley, who was seldom displeased with any thing that a great man said. Carwardine, a pleasant and good friend, made the following memorandum of a conversation which he held with his Lordship on this very subject. It is dated, London, Nov. 10th, 1787. "Lord Thurlow. 'What! is Romney at work on Shakspeare? He cannot paint in that style; it is out of his way: by God, he will make a balderdash business of it!'—Carwardine. 'Your Lordship does not yet thoroughly know Mr. Romney: for he has such a native modesty, that it prevents his showing before your Lordship his real powers.'—Lord Thurlow. 'Have you seen his design?'

—Carwardine. 'No; he shows it to no mortal yet.'—Lord Thurlow. 'I should be glad to talk to him about it; bring him to dine with me to-day.'" Away Carwardine posted to the painter, and said, "Romney, I have been talking to the Chancellor about you and your great picture: he says you cannot paint from Shakspeare."—Romney. "Does he? I should be glad to talk to him about it; for he has some grand ideas in his gloomy head."—Carwardine. "I rejoice to hear you say so. You shall talk with him to-day; for you are already engaged to dine with him."—Romney. "Are you in earnest? But I cannot go."—Carwardine. "But you must go: it is the happiest incident for your grand work that could have arisen." In short, this able negotictor talked the painter into proper spirits; carried him off to the Chancellor's dinner-table; and the great picture from "The Tempest" was debated with warmth and spirit till ten in the evening. It was on this occasion that the Chancellor advised the study of the head of an English nobleman for that of Prospero. Romney examined the character of the countenance, in the company of Hayley, and both pronounced it unsuitable. The modest poet, however, did not leave his friend in the lurch—he suggested the substitution of his own.

To an aid of a softer kind many have imputed the chief charms of Romney's best pictures. "He had the great advantage," says Hayley, "of studying the features and mental character of a lady, on whom nature has lavished such singular beauty, and such extraordinary talents, as have rendered her not only the favourite model of

Romney, whom she honoured with her filial tenderness and esteem, but the idolised wife of an accomplished ambassador." This fascinating dame was that Emma Lyon, destined in a future day, as Lady Hamilton, to exercise such injurious influence over the illustrious Nelson. Her personal loveliness was wonderful; and in her youth she took her beauty freely to the market of art, — exposing her charms without reserve, and so lavishly, that they have found their way into most pictures of that period. Princes and peers contended for copies of her shape and looks, in many attitudes, and many various characters, till the lines of Pope were more than realised: —

> "How many pictures of one nymph we view,
> All how unlike each other — all how true!
> Arcadia's Countess here in ermined pride,
> Is there Pastora by a fountain side;
> Here, Fannia leering on her own good man,
> And there, a naked Leda with a swan."

Painters flattered her by all manner of deification; poets were equally busy; and such homage was paid, that no wonder the woman grew giddy and vain. As it was, to say the truth, the "Fair Emma," as Hayley constantly calls her, seems to have borne herself more becomingly than either our painter or his friend the poet; both of whom seem to have been absolutely sick about her. "Her features," says Hayley, "like the language of Shakspeare, could exhibit all the feelings of nature, and all the gradations of every passion, with a most fascinating truth and felicity of expression. Romney delighted in observing the wonderful command she possessed over her elo-

quent features; and, through the surprising vicissitudes of her destiny, she ever took a generous pride in serving him as a model. One of his earliest fancy pictures, from this animated model, was a whole-length of Circe with her magic wand."

Another was a Sensibility, of which Hayley thus gives the origin.—"During my visit to Romney, in November, 1786, I happened to find him one morning contemplating a recently coloured head, on a small canvass. I expressed my admiration of his unfinished work in the following terms:—'This is a most happy beginning: you never painted a female head with such exquisite expression: you have only to enlarge your canvass, introduce the shrub mimosa growing in a vase, with a hand of this figure approaching its leaves, and you may call your picture a personification of Sensibility.'—'I like your suggestion,' replied the painter; 'and will enlarge my canvass immediately.'—'Do so,' I answered, with exultation; 'and I will hasten to an eminent nurseryman at Hammersmith, and bring you the most beautiful plant I can find.'" The poet coveted the possession of the picture which he thus had helped to create. He obtained it curiously. A gentleman, whose estate lay contiguous, took a fancy to one of Hayley's farms, and desired to buy it. "If you will pay a fair and full market price for the land, according to the valuation of an uninterested person," said this most prudent of all the sons of song, "and purchase and present to me 'The Sensibility' of Romney besides, the land shall be yours." The terms pleased; and

both money and picture were presently in the hands of Hayley.

In order that he might have command of time, for the counsels of Hayley, and the charms of Emma, Romney now lessened the number of his sitters for portraits; admitted no one before noon, and laboured with such diligence, that his health began to be affected. His want of pictorial power of mind compelled him to have living models for what fancy refused to supply. He had no Cassandras, or Magdalens, or Mirandas, in his imagination; he saw them through the looks of Emma Lyon; and as that lady was much in request, the sensitive painter had often, in her absence, to lament the attraction of the very charms which were giving his pictures half their fame. After an absence, which reduced him to despair, the Fair Emma surprised him one day by an early visit, attired in a splendid eastern dress, and attended by Sir William Hamilton. "This seasonable incident raised," says Hayley, "to joyous elevation the sinking spirits of the artist. Romney had ever treated her with the tenderness of a father; which she acknowledged on this occasion with tears of lively gratitude, in announcing to him her splendid prospect of being soon married to Sir William, and attending him to the court of Naples." This raised the spirits of the painter, indeed;—hear how he talks to Hayley in June, 1791.

"At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady: I cannot give her any other

epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says, she must see you before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life; I told her you had begun it: then, she said, she hoped you would have much to say of her, in the life, as she prided herself in being my model." He writes, in July, to the same person, in the same strain. "I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William for two or three weeks. They are very much hurried at present; as every thing is going on for a speedy marriage; and all the world following her, and talking of her: so that, if she had not more good sense than vanity, her brain must be turned. The pictures I have begun are, Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante, for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante."

In a few days, however, we find our too susceptible artist fallen from this ecstatic state, and complaining to Hayley of lost esteem, and sittings promised but not given. "I informed you," he writes, "that I was going to dine with Sir William and his lady. In the evening, there were collected several people of fashion, to hear her sing. She performed both in serious and comic to admiration, both in singing and acting; but her Nina surpasses every thing I ever saw, and, I believe, as a piece of acting, nothing ever surpassed it. The whole company were in an agony of sorrow. My mind was so much heated, that

I was for running down to Eartham, to fetch you up to see her. But, alas! soon after I thought I discovered an alteration in her conduct to me. A coldness and neglect seemed to have taken place of her repeated declarations of regard. They left town to make many visits in the country. It is highly probable, that none of the pictures will be finished. You will see every thing is in great uncertainty."

Now was the poet's time to try and soothe into sweetness the mood of this whimsical beauty: and of the force of the magic which he essayed the reader may judge. "I sent him," said Hayley, "the following rhymes; entreating him to transcribe and present them to the lady, with his own signature:—

"Gracious Cassandra, whose benign esteem
To my weak talent every aid supplied,
Thy smile to me was inspiration's beam,
Thy charms my model, and thy taste my guide.
But say, what cruel clouds have darkly chill'd
Thy favour, that to me was vital fire?
Oh, let it shine again! or, worse than kill'd,
Thy soul-sunk artist feels his art expire."

Before however, this poetic gramoury could be put to proof, the impatient painter threw a spell of his own, which restored smiles to the face of Emma. He thus announces his project and its success to Hayley:—"Cassandra came to town on the 16th, and I did not see her till the 20th, so you may suppose how my feelings must have suffered. When she came to sit on the 23d, she seemed more friendly than she had been; and I *began a picture of her as a pre-*

sent to her mother. I was very successful with it: it is thought the most beautiful head I have painted of her yet. Now, indeed, I think she is as cordial with me as ever; and laments very much, that she is to leave England without seeing you. I take it excessively kind in you to enter so deeply into my distresses. Really, my mind had suffered so very much, that my health was much affected, and I was afraid I should not have had power to have painted any more from her; but since she has resumed her former kindness, my health and spirits are quite recovered. She performed in my house last week, singing and acting before some of the nobility, with most astonishing powers." This lady, on whose good looks the painter's fame so greatly depended, and whose smile restored his health and spirits, soon after sailed, with her doting ambassador, to the congenial court of Naples, where, if none of the fair dames had voices as sweet, and forms as enchanting, many of them were in other respects fit associates for Cassandra.

In the midst of those innumerable designs after Lady Hamilton for the galleries and chambers of princes and noblemen, the painter had taken advantage of an excursion which his model made into the country, to go to Paris, accompanied by his friend, and now constant comrade, Hayley. This visit occurred during those momentous days which abounded in magnificent promises of good to the world; before yet the splendid vision of Liberty and Equality had vanished in a shower of blood. The British ambassador, Earl Gower (now Marquess of

Stafford), the friend of all men of genius, made their access easy to works of art and the company of the scientific and ingenious. A short poem from the pen of Hayley opened the doors of Madame de Genlis. Romney was highly pleased with the sprightly and benevolent lady; and not a little charmed with the engaging disciples of both sexes, who were her companions. On her coming to London afterwards, he drew a very hasty, but accurate, sketch of her animated features. Of the living artists of France, he chiefly admired David, and was often in his company: that too eminent member of the detested Jacobin club had not then dipped his hands in innocent blood; nor called out, in the language of the studio, when he desired to give the guillotine employment, "Let us grind enough of *red*." Of this journey I find nothing else worthy of remembrance.

The year 1792 was saddened by the death of Reynolds, who, however, it will be remembered, had for some time before ceased to be the professional rival of any one. There is no evidence of any serious feud having ever occurred between Romney and him; therefore, no formal reconciliation was looked for or necessary: but that they disliked each other, there can be no doubt. I am not certain that the coming of Romney, which was so unpleasant to the President, was not the most beneficial event that could have happened. The harvest of portraiture, which, before that time, he had reaped alone, did not afterwards entirely employ him, and he found leisure to execute many of those splendid domestic paint-

ings, which give him a twofold claim on the admiration of posterity. The serenity, prudence, and wisdom, which nature gave so largely to Reynolds, she denied to Romney. The sensitive imagination of the latter maintained a war with his happiness; the hostility of a critic, or the coldness of a friend, struck him powerless. "What can be more truly pitiable," says one of his biographers, "than to see great talents frequently rendered inactive by those wonderful variations in the nervous system, that throw a shadowy darkness over the mind, and fill it with phantoms of apprehension!" The death of Reynolds quickened the ambition of Romney: he was now advancing into the vale of years; his health, at all times unequal, he now felt to be much impaired; and he earnestly resolved to employ the days which yet remained, on works that might be worthy of remembrance when he was gone. He had sent his Cassandra to the Shakspeare Gallery; his Calypso and Magdalen were ready to go home to the Prince; and his Maid of Orleans — perhaps the finest head he ever painted — awaited but the finishing touch, in that often-expected season when the mind and hand were to act in perfect unison, and produce works worthy of lasting fame.

In the midst of these noble resolutions, he saw Thomas Paine, whose name, as the author of —"The Rights of Man," and "The Age of Reason" — has been heard far and near; and was persuaded, by a believer from Manchester, to paint his portrait. "It is one of the finest heads," says the Rev. John Romney, "ever

produced by pencil, both for professional skill and physiognomical expression. The character is simple, but vulgar; shrewd, but devoid of feeling." It is much more — it expresses deep, and almost scowling, malignity; did a painter desire to limn the looks of a fiend of the lowest order, he might adopt those of the arch-apostle of misrule. How diabolic is the face of Paine, compared with that of the pious and gifted Cowper, which the painter considered one of the best of his works! Here is learning, with benevolence and genius —

"In it dwells no relentless wrath against the human race."

The conversation of Cowper, and the persuasions of Hayley, induced Romney to seek in Milton for fitting subjects for his pencil; he had already produced a picture from his domestic life — Milton and his Daughters — now in the gallery of Mr. Whitbread. This painting has been praised in both prose and verse. The subject, too, had charms for the unhappy Barry: painters are fond of measuring their strength, more frequently than fairly, with one another.

The difficulty which art encounters in this land, of aiding its conceptions from the living model, was often felt by Romney; and never more than now, when he dedicated so much of his time to works of an historical nature. In order to remedy this as far as possible, he sent a hundred pounds to Flaxman, to purchase for him a number of the finest casts which could be found in Rome; and as the poetic taste of his

friend was undoubted, a splendid consignment came to hand. "I have spent three months in collecting them," writes the sculptor to his brother artist; "some I have had moulded from the antique on purpose; and I think I have sent you the cream of the finest things in Rome, as far as the money would go. There is a group of Laocoön and his sons—the Apollo Belvidere—groups of Castor and Pollux—of Cupid and Psyche—Apollo the lizard-killer—the relief on the Borghese vase—the destruction of Niobe's family—several busts—and the best fragments of legs and arms which I could find." Romney, when he received these, soon discovered that he wanted a studio, where his treasures might find sanctuary, and himself room for executing a series of splendid pictures, which at present lay embodied in his fancy. This structure he determined to build within a few miles of London; and, true to the character assigned him by Hayley, of obeying impulses, he forthwith purchased the ground, lined out the site, and began to draw the plans. He was neither the first nor the last of our eminent artists, whose love of bricks and mortar proved a source of amusement to their friends, and of disquietude to themselves.

His mind teemed now, and indeed at all times, with magnificent designs. He thus discloses his intentions to Hayley, in February, 1794. "I had formed a plan of painting the Seven Ages, and also of the Visions of Adam with the Angel—to bring in the Flood and the Opening of the Ark, which would make six large pictures. Indeed, to tell

you the truth, I have made designs for all the pictures; and very grand subjects they are. My plan is, if I live and retain my senses and sight, to paint six other subjects from Milton — three where Satan is the hero, and three from Adam and Eve; — perhaps six of each. I have ideas of them all, and I may say sketches: but, alas! I cannot begin them for a year or two; and if my name was mentioned, I should hear nothing but abuse, and that I cannot bear. Fear has always been my enemy; my nerves are too weak for supporting any thing in public." Several events occurred this season which shook the nerves of Romney. Gibbon, whom he knew and esteemed, died unexpectedly, exclaiming "Mon Dieu — bon Dieu!" and Cowper, whom he loved next to Hayley, was once more overwhelmed with that fatal dejection of spirit which at length darkened down into hopeless insanity. On receiving, however, information that the poet of "The Task" was reviving, he spoke of mental decay in terms too moving to have been forgotten when the same cloud descended upon himself. "If there is a blessing in nature above all others, it is when a man recovers his lost reason; and if there is a situation more deplorable than any other in nature, it is the horrible decline of reason, and the derangement of that power we have been blest with. How hard it is for a man with a feeling mind to preserve that balance in his understanding, that carries him well through life. Bless all those who dedicate their time to the weakness of the human mind!" A visit to the Isle of Wight, and a journey after-

wards into Hampshire, were expected to brace his nerves and lighten his spirit. But these contributed less to restore him, than a fortunate meeting with Warton the poet, who bestowed such praise on his cartoons in chalk, illustrating the "Persæ" of Æschylus, that he became for a time another man. The return, however, of Flaxman, whose genius he had perceived, and whose future eminence he predicted, seems to have cheered him more than all besides.

Even the sight of a fine painting relieved, for the time, the artist of his despondency. Hayley one day discovered a Correggio and a Salvator Rosa at Teddington; and hastening to the painter, who lay sick in his chamber at Hampstead, told him of the treasure. By gentle persuasion and courteous force, he decoyed him into a coach, and drove off to Teddington; where a cup of coffee from a lady's hand, and the two masterly pictures, restored him at once. He brightened up; was gay, lively; and afterwards declared, that though half dead in the morning, he had never passed a more delightful day.

If we enquire concerning the mental fruit of all these days of sorrow and solicitude, we shall be told of abundance of great designs begun, and but few happily ended — of portraits enow of the beautiful, the rich, and the titled, — but next to none of men of genius, by the delineation of whose features and minds alone a portrait painter has much chance to reach posterity. He placed, indeed, a picture of "Titania and the Indian Votaress" in the elegant but frail fabric of Fonthill; and another fancy-work, of no small merit — Ti-

tania with her Fairies shooting at Bats with bows and arrows — in the Egremont gallery at Petworth. I may add to these The Death of Ophelia, and that of Susan, from the fine ballad of

"'Twas when the seas were roaring."

Neither of these, however, was finished; and the same may be said of a second Titania, — a fine naked figure reposing, fairy-like, in her bower, with honest Bottom slumbering at her side. His "Newton making Experiments with the Prism" was painted as a companion to "Milton and his Daughters," which it resembled in simplicity and domestic character more than in the serene loftiness of look, which is visible in the great poet. There is a silly laugh of wonder on one girl's face, when she sees the prismatic colours projected on the wall; the other girl is in shadow, and holds a caraff of water in her hand, in which a sunbeam is playing. The painter, when feeble of body and depressed in mind, desired to alter the air of the philosopher's head; he began, but could not proceed, and so the picture remains. Hayley, Cumberland, and Bishop Watson, urged Trinity College, Cambridge, to purchase it. They answered, "We have Roubiliac's statue, and that is sufficient:" — perhaps it is.

The year 1797 was unpropitious to Romney, both as a man and an artist. A strange new studio and dwelling-house, which he planned and raised at Hampstead, had an influence on his temper, his studies, and his health. His mind teemed with new projects in art — works almost

too colossal for his genius; and he imagined that his house in Cavendish Square was much too small for the paintings which he contemplated. He was a lover, indeed, of fantastic buildings; and in his hours of leisure pleased himself with planning houses and galleries, all for his own accommodation, and the advantage of art. Hayley, who seems to have had little faith in his skill in the management of bricks and mortar, advised him to consult an architect; he did so, and had his ideas reduced into working order — so little, however, to his satisfaction, that he soon dismissed his assistant, and commenced architect for himself. His success was such as might have been looked for: he spent nearly a year in superintendence,—expended some 2733*l.*,—and raised an odd and whimsical structure, in which there was nothing like domestic accommodation; though there was a wooden arcade for a riding-house in the garden, and a very extensive picture and statue gallery. The moment the plasterers and joiners had ceased working, before the walls were even half dry, this impatient man of genius bade farewell to Cavendish Square, after a residence there of twenty-one years; and arranging his pictures and statues in his new gallery, and setting up his easels for commencing the historical compositions for which all this travail had been undergone, imagined that a new hour of glory was come.

A new hour had, indeed, come; but it was of a darker kind.

To those not intimate with Romney, he still appeared vigorous in frame and strong in mind,

and likely to reach an advanced age in full possession of all his faculties. He was now some sixty-four years old; had acquired a high name; was rich enough to please himself in his mode of life, and master of his own time, and of a gallery which combined the treasures of ancient art with some of the best of the modern. All that seemed wanting now was for the painter to dip his brush in historical colours, and give a visible existence to some of those magnificent pictures with which his imagination teemed. He set up his easels; put his colours in order; and then stretching himself on a sofa, gazed down upon London, which, with its extensive roofs and numerous domes and spires, lay far and wide before him. The old demon of nervous dejection had waited for the moment of apparent satisfaction, and opening glory, to stoop once more on his prey. Hayley heard of his condition; and, though needing consolation himself, from the illness of a promising son, he hastened to see him. "I found Romney," says the poet, "much dejected in his new mansion on the hill of Hampstead for want of occupation and society: I advised him to employ himself a little with his pencil, and offered to sit to him merely for his amusement. He began a head, the first attempted in his new painting room; and, though his hand shook a little, yet he made a very creditable beginning, and thus pleased himself. The next morning he advanced his sketch more happily: as the very effort of beginning to work again, under the encouragement of an old friend, seemed to have done him great good." The poet failed to perceive that his

mental strength was impaired, and that even his skill of hand had partly forsaken him. That love of whimsical buildings, of which, in his latter days, he had given various proofs — his desire, often and anxiously reiterated, for a more extended space than Cavendish Square afforded for displaying the powers of his genius in — these may be considered as signs that his mind, like a watch when the balance-wheel is wrong, was running through the hours of existence at random. "There is a certain dignity," says Henry Mackenzie, "in retiring from life at a time when the infirmities of age have not sapped our faculties." But who shall point out this happy time? A man of genius does not, and his friends will not, perceive or acknowledge any general symptoms of decay; and it is not till the world at large has, by unequivocal signs, announced its perception of the sad truth, that he is admonished to retire. Hayley perceived, after many a visit given and returned, much admonition expended, and much time consumed, in attempting to restore order to the chaos of his manifold works, that both mind and man were sinking.

Romney still lingered, brush in hand, on Hampstead Hill;—his powers of conception, and his skill in execution, had sunk five or six points in the scale of excellence; but it was fondly hoped that some sudden emotion or happy incident would restore him. He dashed in, with a trembling and uncertain hand, a scene from Macbeth; half painted a portrait of himself with spectacles on; complained of a swimming in his head, and a paralytic numbness in his right hand; and then renounced

the brush for ever. It was more than time. His son had observed, the previous year, that, though he was become more corpulent and looked more healthy, the energy of his mind was impaired; and in the month of April, 1799, when Hayley visited him for the last time at Hampstead, he had the "grief of perceiving that his increasing weakness of body and mind afforded only a gloomy prospect for the residue of his life."

The summer of 1799 came; but Romney could neither enjoy the face of nature, nor feel pleasure in his studio and gallery. A visible mental languor sat upon his brow — not diminishing, but increasing; he had laid aside his pencils; his swarms of titled sitters, whose smiles in other days rendered passing time so agreeable, were moved off to a Lawrence, a Shee, or a Beechey; and thus left lonely and disconsolate among whole cart-loads of paintings, which he had not the power to complete, his gloom and his weakness gathered and grew upon him. Hayley was at a distance, and came not; and as the sinking man was considered as a sort of enemy or rival to the Royal Academy, few of its members appeared to soothe or cheer him. In these moments his heart and his eye turned towards the North, — where his son, a man affectionate and kind, resided; and where his wife, surviving the cold neglect and long estrangement of her husband, lived yet to prove the depth of woman's love, and show to the world that she would have been more than worthy of appearing at his side, even when earls sat for their pictures,

and Lady Hamilton was enabling him to fascinate princes with his Calypsos and Cassandras. Romney, without imparting his intentions to any one, departed from Hampstead; and taking the northern coach, arrived among his friends at Kendal in the summer of 1799. The exertion of travelling, and the presence of her whom he once had warmly loved, overpowered him; he grew more languid and more weak; and finding fireside happiness—to which all other human joy is but casual or weak—he resolved to remain where he was; purchased a house, and authorised the sale of that on Hampstead Hill, which had cost him so much in peace and purse.

In describing the latter days of this distinguished artist, I adopt the words of Hayley. "He retired to Kendal, where he had the comfort of finding an attentive, affectionate nurse in a most exemplary wife, who had never been irritated to an act of unkindness, or an expression of reproach, by his years of absence and neglect." On this subject the son of the painter is all but silent; it was indeed a delicate matter which he had to handle in speaking of the conduct of his parents. But though he condescends to say little, candour must interpret the little he says, to the advantage and the honour of their memories; and I most gladly do so. It would have been as well, nevertheless, if he had said something in confirmation of the words quoted from Hayley, of whose narrative, as far as concerns the early estrangement of his father from his mother, he speaks with some resentment. The reverend biographer, perhaps, means we should understand

from his memoir, that no serious estrangement had ever taken place; and that as Romney had paid the wife of his bosom two visits in the course of thirty years, his final return to her society required no explanation, further than his illness, and is to be received as a matter of course. I am the more anxious on this point, because I hold that, in proportion as a man's works are worthy of notice, so is his conduct as a man worthy of being known. I can never consent to look upon a man of genius as a mere holder of a pen or pencil, of whom nothing further than how he placed his writing-desk, or mixed up his palette, deserves to be noted. This would be paying a poor compliment to genius; but the world wisely demands to know as much as possible of the characters of its benefactors, and all biographers worthy of the name have striven to obey in this respect the dictates of natural good sense and feeling.

Sinking in mind and body, as the painter was, he continued to correspond with Hayley — sometimes drew a little in crayons — and walked out in the sunshine. In his letters he spoke of the attentions of his wife with the tenderest gratitude; expressed a hope that he should soon be gladdened by the return of his brother, Colonel Romney, from the East Indies; and on hearing that Lady Hamilton had come to England, and wished to see him, he replied in these words: "The pleasure I should receive from a sight of the amiable Lady Hamilton would be as salutary as great; yet I fear, except I should enjoy more health and better spirits, I shall never be able to see London

again. I feel every day greater need of care and attention; and here I experience them in the highest degree" This was written 13th December, 1800; and Romney, though failing fast, was still sensible of the kindness of his friends, and willing to cheer himself as he best might. The scene suddenly changed: Colonel Romney arrived, and hastened to his brother, to whom he was much attached. He found him helpless in body, and so much weakened in memory and mind, that he could with difficulty recall him to recollection.. "Brother," he said, "do you not know me?" Romney looked eagerly in his face, —burst into an agony of tears,—half articulated some words of recognition,—and then, and for ever, forgot him and all else that loved him in the world. He sunk into helpless imbecility; and, without pain or consciousness, *breathed* till the 15th of November, 1802, when he had nearly completed his sixty-eighth year. He died at Kendal, and was buried at Dalton, where he was born.

In person, Romney was tall and strong; his shoulders inclined to the round; his features were broad and manly—his hair dark—his eyes large, quick, and discerning. He used to say, he considered that sensibility lay in the muscles of the lips: his own, Hayley remarks, quivered with emotions of pity at the sight of distress, or at the relation of a pathetic story. His feelings were so perilously acute, that they misled him into many frailties; and this extreme sensibility is the charm which Hayley employs to screen him from all charges affecting him, whether as a

man or as an artist. His deep sensibility prevents him from painting well any where save in solitude; his nervous sensibility hinders him from treating with the silent dignity of contempt the studied injuries of criticism; and his extreme sensibility respecting professional eminence induces him to desert his wife and his children, and tempt the manifold perils of London. Sensibility, it is plain, cannot bear the blame of all this; for sensibility respects the obligations of love or of wedlock, and would not advise us to forsake the wife of our bosom, nor the children that blessed the nuptial bed. Truth compels utterance to so much; but if we could pass over this grievous error, there appears nothing in the character of Romney which is unworthy of his genius. He was kind, generous, and upright; ready to feel for the poor and the humble, and as ready with his purse: he was ever willing, too, to oblige his friends; and painted portraits of all men of any rank, without much entreaty or wish of emolument. He was likewise kind and indulgent to all young artists: it is to the honour of his discernment that he was among the first to perceive the dawning genius of Flaxman; and to the honour of his heart, that he was his friend when friends were few: and it is to the honour of both, that they cordially loved one another; and not only have in their letters, but in their professional works, left many proofs of their mutual affection and esteem. Flaxman says, "I always remember Mr. Romney's notice of my boyish years and productions with gratitude: his original and striking conversation; his masterly, grand, and feeling

compositions, are continually before me; and I still feel the benefits of his acquaintance and recommendations."

Romney not having had the advantage of a regular education, Cumberland, in consequence, considered him as next to illiterate; and we have seen that a Lord Chancellor accused him of not having read even Shakspeare. His various works, however, betray no deficiency in knowledge of either history or poetry: indeed, a great painter must necessarily be something of an instructed man; and with regard to Shakspeare, he has nowhere misinterpreted, though he may have fallen a little below him, — as who has not? It surely cannot expose a man of eminence to the imputation of being ignorant of his country's first poet, that he has not studied his pages with the scientific anxiety of a Kemble or a Garrick. Cumberland, again, talks of the vulgarity of his friend's conversation; and imputes this defect, in a great degree, to his being shut out from intercourse with the titled and the great. What was the dramatist himself about, during all his long intercourse with Romney? He was a teacher of manners, and ought to have drilled his rustic associate into the ways of the great: surely, some passable shadow of politeness, both of tongue and of manners, might soon have been acquired, if a man of such talents considered it worth the trouble. But the truth is, that Cumberland, in respect to this part of his story, is manifestly mistaken. The very profession in which Romney excelled, and in which he was the rival of Reynolds, gave him abundant access to, nay, even

forced on him, the company of the high and the courtly. The numerous portraits which he painted are a sufficient proof of this; and, were other proof wanting, his letters would furnish it. He was the frequent guest of some of the noblest in the land; and, moreover, his works, uniting portrait and history, brought all lovers of art to his studio: he mixed, I fancy, as much as any of his order, except Reynolds, with men of rank and fashion. Flaxman, we have shown, praises his original and striking conversation; and surely the applause of one at once so wise and so virtuous would, at any time, weigh such a testimony as that of Cumberland down. And yet we must not forget that the latter himself says, with unexpected candour — "When in company with his intimates, he would give vent to the effusions of his fancy, and harangue in the most animated manner upon the subject of his art, with a sublimity of idea, and a peculiarity of expressive language, that was entirely his own, and in which education or reading had no share. These sallies of natural genius, clothed in natural eloquence, were perfectly original, very highly edifying, and entertaining in the extreme. They were uttered in a hurried accent, an elevated tone, and very commonly accompanied by tears, to which he was by constitution prone."

The works of Romney are of two kinds, history and portrait; in both of which he attained, in the eyes of many, great distinction, and, during his day, ranked with the foremost. There was, however, some truth, though more bitterness, in the saying of Fuseli, that Romney was made for the

times, and the times for him. He certainly adopted or followed the fashion and feeling of his day more than a man who believes he is labouring for immortality ought ever to do. Nothing is immutable but nature: the fashion which we bow to to-day, we smile at to-morrow; and Romney's historical pieces have been greatly lowered in value by his non-attention to this. We offer no such reproach as to his portraits, in which, on the contrary, it is a charm to trace something like the fashion of their times, and in conformity with their manners. We ought to know at first sight the cavaliers of Charles from the roundheads of Cromwell.

Of this class of his works we have already named some; and may name a few more: — 1. Flaxman modelling the bust of Hayley. 2. The Duke of Richmond. 3. The Earl of Westmorland. 4. Warren Hastings. 5. The Duke of Portland. 6. The Duke of Grafton. 7. Lord Melville. 8. The Margrave and Margravine of Anspach. 9. Mrs. Fitzherbert. 10. Lord Ellenborough. 11. Dr. Paley. 12. The Archbishop of Dublin. 13. The Archbishop of York. 14. Bishop Watson. 15. Lord Thurlow. 16. Mrs. Hodges (the frail). 17. John Wesley. 18. Mrs. Tighe. 19. Mrs. Rouse and Child. 20 Mrs. Billington. 21. Dr. Parr. 22. The Duchess of Cumberland. 23. Archbishop of Canterbury. 24. The Sons of Sir George Wynne. 25. Mrs. Jordan. 26. David Hartley, the British minister for settling matters with America. 27. The Bishop of Salisbury. 28. Dr. Farmer, master of Emanuel College. 29. William Pitt. 30. Earl of Chatham. 31. The two

Miss Thurlows. 32. Lady Brownlow. 33. Lady Georgiana Smith and Child. 34. The Earl of Derby. 35. Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester. 36. Lady Augusta Murray. 37. The Countess of Sutherland (now Marchioness of Stafford). This list might be lengthened; and, undoubtedly, there appear such skill in drawing, such accuracy of delineation, and such clear and natural colouring in these portraits, as in a great measure justify the taste of those who crowded to his easel, and considered him as the rival of Reynolds, and the chief painter of the age. It may be considered as censure, that Flaxman, in his estimate—and a high one it is—of his genius, never so much as alludes to his almost innumerable portraits; works which brought him into notice, and provided the means of those studies in which alone the great sculptor perceived the true artist. The coat and waistcoat style, as it was called, had no charms for him, who looked on works of art with a severe and classic eye. In his portraits, Romney missed, certainly, the grace and ease, and the fine flush of colouring, which have brought lasting fame to Reynolds; and he wanted, moreover, his illustrious rival's exquisite prudence in handling the costume of the day, so as to soften down its capes, and cuffs, and buttons. There appear, however, traces of great dignity and manliness in all his heads — and, in some, a certain touch of poetic loftiness, of which Reynolds has furnished hardly an example.

His historical and domestic pictures, finished and unfinished, deserve a more minute examination; they embrace a wide range of reading and

observation, and are numerous beyond all modern example. The extravagant laudations of Cumberland and Hayley might be accounted for by their personal affection for the man: they were both prodigiously vain; and might have thought that whatever their own chosen artist's pencil touched, rose at once into life, and beauty, and dignity. The admiration of the wise, good, and conscientious Flaxman is, however, entitled to far different consideration; and there can be no doubt that he deemed Romney one of the noblest of all living painters.

"When Romney," he says, "first began to paint, he had seen no gallery of pictures, nor the fine productions of ancient sculpture: but then women and children were his statues, and all objects under the cope of heaven formed his school of painting. The rainbow, the purple distance, or the silver lake, taught him colouring; the various actions and passions of the human figure, with the forms of clouds, woods, and mountains, or valleys, afforded him studies of composition. Indeed, his genius bore a strong resemblance to the scenes he was born in: like them, it partook of the grand and beautiful; and like them, also, the bright sunshine and enchanting prospects of his fancy were occasionally overspread with mist and gloom. On his arrival in Italy, he was witness to new scenes of art and sources of study, of which he could only have supposed previously that something of the kind might exist: for he there contemplated the purity and perfection of ancient sculpture, the sublimity of Michael Angelo's Sistine Chapel, and the simplicity of Cimabue and

Giotto's schools. He perceived those qualities distinctly, and judiciously used them in viewing and imitating nature; and thus his quick perception and unwearied application enabled him, by a two years' residence abroad, to acquire as great a proficiency in art as is usually attained by foreign studies of a much longer duration.

"After his return, the novelty and sentiment of his original subjects were universally admired. Most of these were of the delicate class; and each had its peculiar character. Titania, with her Indian Votaress, was arch and sprightly; Milton dictating to his Daughters, solemn and interesting. Several pictures of Wood Nymphs and Bacchants, charmed by their rural beauty, innocence, and simplicity. The most pathetic, perhaps, of all his works was never finished — Ophelia, with the flowers she had gathered in her hand, sitting on the branch of a tree, which was breaking under her, whilst the melancholy distraction visible in her lovely countenance accounts for the insensibility to her danger. Few painters have left so many examples in their works of the tender and delicate affections; and several of his pictures breathe a kindred spirit with the Sigismonda of Correggio. His Cartoons, some of which have unfortunately perished, were examples of the sublime and terrible; at that time perfectly new in English art. As Romney was gifted with peculiar powers for historical and ideal painting, so his heart and soul were engaged in the pursuit of it, whenever he could extricate himself from the importunate business of portrait-painting. It was his delight by day, and study by night; and for

this his food and rest were often neglected. His compositions, like those of the ancient pictures and basso-relievos, told their story by a single group of figures in the front; whilst the background is made the simplest possible, rejecting all unnecessary episode and trivial ornament, either of secondary groups or architectural subdivision. In his compositions, the beholder was forcibly struck by the sentiment at the first glance; the gradations and varieties of which he traced through several characters, all conceived in an elevated spirit of dignity and beauty, with a lively expression of nature in all the parts. His heads were various — the male were decided and grand; the female, lovely: his figures resembled the antique — the limbs were elegant and finely formed: his drapery was well understood; either forming the figure into a mass with one or two deep folds only, or, by its adhesion and transparency, discovering the form of the figure, the lines of which were finely varied with the union or expansion of spiral or cascade folds, composing with or contrasting the outline and chiaro-oscuro. Few artists, since the fifteenth century, have been able to do so much in so many different branches: for, besides his beautiful compositions and pictures, which have added to the knowledge and celebrity of the English school, he modelled like a sculptor, carved ornaments in wood with great delicacy, and could make an architectural design in a fine taste, as well as construct every part of the building."

In the eulogium of Flaxman are read the sentiments of a fine judge; but we must, never-

theless, look upon it as the opinion of one more desirous to dwell on excellencies than to point out defects. It was a great merit in the sculptor's eyes that Romney was enthusiastic about the ideal in art — that he was in raptures with the antique, and aimed at severe simplicity in his compositions. His ideas were often, indeed, original and striking; but, in communicating them to the canvass, he exhibited not a little of the deficiency visible in the productions of the great sculptor himself, viz. a certain air of heaviness in form, and want of grace and delicacy in workmanship, which detract seriously from the merit of the conception. Few artists of the present day would concur, without some abatement, in the high character which Flaxman has bestowed on the works of Romney. His ideal and historical pieces are numerous; and it may be safely said, that some of them are equal, in loftiness of thought, and in simplicity of conception, to any productions of that class in the British school. But it must not be concealed, that his *finished works* of that order are few. For one finely finished, there are five half done; and for five half done, there are at least a dozen merely commenced on the canvass. More seems to have been wanting than patronage: I cannot help suspecting that the painter was deficient in that creative power which enables men of the highest rank of genius to body forth their groups in imagination, and *completely fix* them before the mind's eye, even as a living person sits for a portrait. He seems, at least, to have yielded too much to the impulse of the moment — he was ever ready to begin a

new subject, but exceeding loath to finish an old one; and we are left to lament that so many conceptions of a high order are left in the crude elements of the art.

To fourteen pictures the charms of Lady Hamilton contributed their attractions;— 1. Circe, a fascinating figure, but unaccompanied, as was intended, by her suitors metamorphosed to brutes: the painter could obtain no tractable models, and laid the work aside. 2. Iphigenia, a whole-length, unfinished. 3. St. Cecilia, bought by Mr. Montague Burgoyne for seventy guineas. 4. Sensibility, bought by Mr. Hayley for one hundred guineas. 5. Bacchante, a half-length, sent to Sir William Hamilton at Naples, and lost at sea returning. 6. Calope exposed with her Child, bought by Admiral Vernon for sixty guineas. 7. The Spinstress, bought by Mr. Craven for one hundred and fifty guineas. 8. Cassandra, for the Shakspeare Gallery, for one hundred and eighty guineas. 10. A Bacchante, bought by Sir John Leicester for twenty-five guineas. 11. Calypso, and 12. Magdalene, for the Prince of Wales, two hundred pounds. 13. Joan of Arc, unfinished. 14. The Pythian Priestess, unfinished.

I shall enumerate a few more of those which he commenced and laid aside: they will show the range of his mind, and also his want of patience to render his works worthy of admission to public galleries. 1. A naked Lady, caressing a Child; 2. Venus and Adonis; 3. Jupiter; 4. King Lear asleep; 5. King Lear awake; 6. Ceyx and Alcyone; 7. Medea; 8. The Death of Niobe's Children; 9. The Cumean Sibyl foretelling the

destiny of Æneas; 10. Electra and Orestes at the Tomb of Agamemnon; 11. Thetis supplicating Jupiter (Iliad, book i.); 12. Thetis comforting Achilles (Id. book xviii.); 13 Una; 14. Hebe; 15. Psyche; 16. A Mother with her Child, flying from a city in flames; 17. Celadon and Amelia; 18. Damon and Musidora; 19. The Dying Mother; 20. Homer reciting his Verses; 21. David and Saul; 22. Macbeth and Banquo; 23. The Weird Sisters; 24. The Descent of Odin; 25. Fortune-telling; 26. The Ghost of Clytemnestra; 27. Eurydice vanishing from Orpheus; 28. Harpalice, a Thracian Princess, defending her wounded Father; 29. Paris found dying by Mountain Nymphs; 30. Romney's Dream; 31. Gil Morrice; 32. Antigone with the dead Body of Polynices; 33. The Grecian Daughter; 34. Two Girls chasing a Butterfly; 35. A Witch displaying her magical Powers; 36. Resuscitation by force of Magic; 37. Doll Tearsheet — "Captain! thou abominable damned cheater," &c.; 38. The Birth of Man; 39. The Temptation of Christ. To these may be added the Cartoons which Flaxman admired so much; Cupid and Psyche; Orpheus and Eurydice; Prometheus chained; Medea; Ghost of Darius, and Atossa's Dream. Thirty-eight of his designs and studies were deposited by the painter's son in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and the Cartoons were presented by the same hand to the Liverpool Institution.

"I have made many grand designs; I have formed a system of original subjects, moral and my own, and I think one of the grandest that has

been thought of—but nobody knows it. Hence it is my view to wrap myself in retirement and pursue these plans, as I begin to feel I cannot bear trouble of any kind." These were the words of Romney in March, 1794, but they apply to all periods of his life — he was ever dreaming and sketching. Much of this wandering of the fancy must be attributed to Hayley: the poet overwhelmed and distracted the painter by all manner of suggestions; when he had done painting Sensibilities and Serenas for bedrooms and books, they opened volumes of verse or history, and as the friend dictated the artist drew. But it is not always from the finest passages in poetry or the noblest in history that artists form the best and most striking pictures. They are often found, on trial by the pencil, to owe their chief charm to what art can find neither form nor colours to express. Fortunately for himself and the world, Romney, in the absence of his officious poet, became sensible that he had attempted subjects beyond the reach of his department; and laying such wild dreams aside, singled out occasionally homelier subjects, which, having affected his own fancy, and been embodied under the influence of genuine feeling, have secured a lasting and an honourable place to his name.

RUNCIMAN.

ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN — a man, in his day, of great estimation, and whose works can never be considered as deficient in power and genius—was born at Edinburgh in the year 1736. Like Jamesone's before him, his father was an architect; and, as architecture in those days frequently called in the pencil to embellish its ceilings and its walls, he was, in a manner, nursed in the lap of art. When some six years old he began to make rude drawings; and before he was twelve had shown such a decided inclination to painting, that his father was induced to encourage him. Furnished with pencils, and brushes, and colours, he took to the fields; his first sketches were rocks, trees, and waterfalls: his friends perceived in those crude attempts a genius for landscape; and Runciman, at the age of fourteen, was placed in the studio of John and Robert Norris — the former of whom was, in the current language of his day, "a celebrated landscape painter." His progress here was such as was to be looked for from one of the wildest enthusiasts that ever devoted themselves to the art; he seemed to live and breathe for painting alone. "Other artists," said one who had been his companion, "talked meat and drink, but Runciman talked landscape."

A strong love of art prevailed at that time in Scotland. Robert and Andrew Foulis, two eminent printers in Glasgow, established in that city an academy of the fine arts, where engraving, and modelling, and drawing were taught; where specimens of antique art were collected, and aspirants of genius were invited to live and to study free of all expense. An establishment so generous was not likely to last long; but for a time its influence was powerful. A similar spirit existed in Edinburgh: nothing was talked of but Michael Angelo, the Sistine Chapel, and the grand style: the children of the easel rejoiced; and it was in the midst of these pleasant and palmy times that Runciman, renouncing the tutelage of Norris, commenced on his own account, and exhibited himself in landscape, in 1755.

He committed here an ordinary error: the pleasure of new-acquired freedom, and the desire of standing erect and alone, had tempted him, and prevailed. Many, indeed, applauded his paintings, and more his sketches; but applause is not food and raiment: there were few or none to purchase, and Runciman was obliged to console himself with the assurance of his admirers, "that his hour of fame was coming; and beautiful as his works now were, the day would arrive when their beauty would be such as to compel purchasers." He allowed himself to be comforted in the words afterwards adopted by a biographer, in relating his ill fortune. "These are, indeed, excellent; yet they are only the foreshadowings of future greatness, and an indica-

tion of that superlative merit you are yet to display in this branch of art."

With finer powers, at least bestowed on infinitely finer works, Wilson was starving amid the opulence and the patronage of London: no wonder that his fellow-adventurer of the North toiled in vain during five long years at Edinburgh. The great Englishman had, in leaving portraiture, forsaken fortune for fame; and the Scotsman, when he had discovered the barrenness of landscape, only turned to starve in a more conspicuous manner on historical composition. "The versatility of his talents," says one of his biographers, "did not permit him to be great only in one department. In 1760 his genius launched into the extensive regions of history painting, where, in delineating human passions, his energetic mind had greater scope than in portraying peaceful fields, the humble cottage, and the unambitious shepherd." These are, as Fluellen says of the language of Ancient Pistol, as brave words as a man would wish to hear on a summer's day; but they must not disguise the fact of the artist's total failure in landscape, the first-born of his fancy.

To the new study of historical composition he, however, addressed himself with all the enthusiasm of hope; and being, according to the fashion of the time, fully persuaded that nothing could be done without a visit to Italy, he in the year 1766, at thirty years of age, set out on the great pilgrimage with a light purse and an exulting heart. His language on this occasion was sufficiently lofty: — he would kneel before the Carracci, and make an obeisance to Raphael, and

give at the shrine of genius what he withheld from that of Saint Peter. If we may believe the opinion expressed by one of his biographers, he was well prepared to profit by his journey: — "He could, indeed, say, with the artist, whose works he beheld, 'And I also am a painter,' as he had now practised at least twelve years, and had attained a proficiency which some would have thought precluded the necessity of going abroad. But he longed to converse in high vision with the shades of the illustrious dead, on the spot where once they lived."

In Rome it was his fortune to meet with Fuseli; and as they resembled each other in many things, indeed in most things except learning, — of which Runciman was as innocent as the ordinary run of his brethren were then, and still continue to be, — an immediate brotherhood commenced between them. The Scot was seven years older than the Swiss, — had laboured longer in art, — was of a gentler temper, and less imperious in conversation. In a more essential matter they came closer: — they were rivals in that unbridled license of imagination, which introduced an air of inspired madness, and considerate extravagance, into the sublimest and sternest subjects on which they employed their pencils. They bear a remarkable resemblance to each other: their drawings — and in these they are both seen to most advantage — seem the work of the same hand and mind; they are distinguished by the same splendid freedom of outline, — the same dashing mode of treatment, — the same immoderate length of body and limb, and the same resolution of never

doing a gentle action with ease, nor a heroic one without perilous straining and toiling. Most of these sketches of Runciman are youthful efforts, struck off in the early days of his enthusiasm, and must therefore claim priority of date over the works of Fuseli. How far the one influenced the other, it is now impossible to tell: it appears to me indeed more than likely that their works, though, like those of Beaumont and Fletcher, they might be united into one continued series, were the offspring of separate and uninfluenced study. Fuseli at least could have needed little either of precept or example to lead him into the walk which he adopted; for to him exaggeration was more natural than true decorum and nice propriety. Be that as it may, the resemblance between their works is very striking, and has been observed by our most eminent artists. In a letter which Fuseli wrote from Rome, he said, "I send this by the hands of Runciman, whom I am sure you will like; he is one of the best of us here."

He remained in Rome during five years, and practised his hand and eye, morning, noon, and night, in drawing from the antique, copying the best works of the great masters, and assiduous study of those paintings of an historic order which are scattered profusely through the Italian galleries. "By these means," says one of his biographers, "he not only increased in facility and truth in drawing, but acquired new general principles, and a more refined and correct taste. His conceptions, too, could not fail of being still farther enlarged by the view of so many sublime

works of genius. The art of composition, of such consequence in an historical painter, could only be thoroughly learned from attentively studying its principles, as they are exemplified in those scientific standards; and he caught, with such truth, the rich yet chastened style of colouring of the Venetian school, that he was allowed to excel, in this quality, all his competitors." In comparing the productions of Runciman with this friendly estimate of his improvement, it will however be found, that the demons of extravagance and exaggeration continued with him still. If the calm, majestic genius of Raphael pointed the true way to the sublime and the historic, the unbridled genius of Michael Angelo loosed the evil spirit which the other laid. It is true, that more consistency of story, more skilful grouping, and a chaster style of colouring, found their way into the works of Runciman, — but still the original sin of the man was manifest, — the love of perpetual motion, the double-double toil-and-trouble sort of action triumphed over all. He returned home in the year 1771; he came by the way of London, but saw nothing to tempt his stay in that City of Promise to genius, and so proceeded to Edinburgh, where he arrived in a fortunate hour.

The national spirit, broken almost by a series of mischances, and oppressed by the night-mare power of England, which lay heavy upon Scotland, deadening every limb, through the reigns of the two first Georges, recovered its original strength when a king of a mild and fatherly temper succeeded to the throne, and asserted its dignity in

every department of science and speculation. Associations began to be formed for the furtherance of art; and the academy established in Edinburgh College, in the year 1760, showed promising symptoms of life and vigour. So far, however, had all knowledge of art sunk amongst the Scotch, that no native could be found worthy of being at the head of the infant establishment. It is true that Allan Ramsay, son of the poet, had shown, by both pen and pencil, that he inherited the genius of his family; but he had become painter to the King, and was settled in London. What could not be found at home was therefore to be sought abroad, and De la Cour and Pavillon, French artists of some skill in outline, successively filled the situation of Professor. The death of the latter had recently occurred, and immediately on Runciman's arrival, he was solicited to fill the vacant situation.

The salary—120*l.* per annum I believe—was indeed small, yet it was sufficient for the independence of one whose wants were few: he accordingly accepted the place, and entered upon its duties with more enthusiasm, and perhaps with less patience, than their character required. Of his labours as a teacher much has been said; yet the fruits of his ministration, if his merits are to be so weighed, were neither very abundant nor very beautiful. It is true, that many of those who repair to such places mistake inclination for talent, and a vagrant impulse for a settled fitness of soul, and that from such clods of the valley nothing to reflect lustre on the hapless teacher can be expected: but this is the

case with all academies; and we must leave the poverty of the Edinburgh school under the new professor to be accounted for as it may. Many sagacious and learned men, as we all know, have questioned in the general the propriety of all such institutions; and there can be no doubt either that they foster a rank crop of the loathsome weeds of mediocrity, or that true genius often flourishes the most when left to educate itself. But if there are to be academies at all, there can be little doubt that the professors ought to be distinguished for accuracy of knowledge, and elegance of taste — points in which, it must be admitted, the strength of Runciman did not lie.

The patronage which the North extended to art in those days was far from ample; still works of genius found some generous patrons — among the best known of whom were Sir J. Clerk of Pennycuick; and Mr. Robert Alexander, a merchant in Edinburgh. From Clerk, Runciman had already received some assistance during his Roman studies; and to Alexander he, among others, was indebted for so many acts of liberality, that one who knew the case well has said, "Scotland owes more to Robin Alexander for the countenance and support of rising genius, than to the whole body of her nobility." Historical painting had become the confirmed idol of Runciman since he had beheld the wonders of the Sistine; and he was no sooner settled in the North than he submitted the design of a great national work to Sir J. Clerk, namely, to embellish his hall at Pennycuick with a series of paintings from Ossian. This was agreed to at once. The poems ascribed to

the blind old man of Morven were at that time in all the full-blown splendour of fame: the singular boldness of the style — the wildness of the imagery — the deep, heroic, and chivalrous feelings which they breathed, rendered them universal favourites; and when it is considered that a nation's vanity was involved in their history, and its character emblazoned on every page, no wonder that Scotland eagerly received and adopted what was announced as the offspring of her own cultivated genius, produced at a period when all other European nations were barbarians. The reigning wits of England meantime looked on with distrust or derision: Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Garrick, and all that coterie, together with Boswell, — whose natural prejudices were as nothing to his worship of Johnson, —amused themselves with lampoons in prose or verse against Fingal, Temora, and the whole race of Celtic poems, whether epic or lyric.

When it was told that Pennycuick was to be adorned with a series of paintings from those works, and that the hall was to be called Ossian's Hall, the mirth of these unbelievers knew no bounds. Men of talent are, however, seldom driven from their purpose by the malice of wit or the bitterness of humour. Runciman, — content to receive for truth what his own nation believed, — read, studied, sketched, and imagined he saw in those effusions a series of fine historical subjects, such as would make the hall of Ossian a rival to the Sistine Chapel. And, supposing Ossian to be authentic, Runciman was right: the works of art with which a nation adorns

herself should be from her own story; and to seek in Scottish poetry for his subjects was surely wiser far in a Scottish painter than to have recourse to the trite and hopelessly defunct mythology of Greece. The heroes, and spirits of heroes, and wild divinities of the Celtic bard, had, moreover, the recommendation of novelty; and, finally, whether some ancient Highlander did or did not produce the whole, or any particular passages, no man now disputes but that the pages of "Ossian" do abound in poetry of the highest order. Sir J. Clerk readily entered into the feelings and wishes of the painter; sketches were made and approved, scaffolds raised; and to work he accordingly went, with all the enthusiasm of one who believes he is earning an immortal name. But there is no work, however much it may be the offspring of one's own heart, that can be accomplished perhaps in the same spirit in which it was commenced. Men of taste, connoisseurs, patrons of the fine arts, were ready, with their dissonance of opinion, to excite pain in the mind of a sensitive artist: pain of mind was aggravated by pain of body; he had to lie so much on his back, while occupied with the ceiling of the hall, that his health failed; while, to add to other vexations, the searching spirit of enquiry and criticism began to sap more and more the lines of circumvallation within which Macpherson had intrenched himself; and that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, began to be doubted even among the Scotch. He painted on, nevertheless, and finished his very romantic undertaking.

There are twelve principal paintings, representing some of the finest passages of the poems: 1. Ossian singing to Malvina. "Daughter of the hand of snow, I was not so mournful and blind when Everallan loved me." 2. The Valour of Oscar. "Behold, they fall before my son, like the groves in the desert when an angry ghost rushes through night, and takes their green heads in his hand. Cairbar shrinks from Oscar's sword, and creeps in darkness behind his stone. He lifted up his spear in secret, and pierced my Oscar's side." 3. The Death of Oscar. "We saw Oscar on his shield; we saw his blood around; — silence darkens every face; each turns his face and weeps, — the king strives to hide his tears." 4. Death of Agandecca. "Bring hither, says Starno, Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven. She came with red eyes of tears, — she came with her loose and raven locks: Starno pierced her side with steel, — she fell like a wreath of snow which slides from the rocks of Ronan." 5. The Hunting of Catholda. "Many a hero came to woo the maid, the stately huntress of Termoth wild: but thou lookest careless from thy steps, high-bosomed Strina Donna." 6. The Finding of Corban Cargloss. "Who art thou, voice of night, said Fingal? She tremblingly turned away: a moon-beam glittered on a rock; — in the midst stood a stately form, a swan with floating locks." 7. Golchossa mourning over Lamderg. "Three days she mourned beside her love." 8. Oina Morval. "In the hall I lay at night; soft music came to my ear; it was the Maid of Fuarfed wild, she raised the nightly song; for she knew that

my soul was a stream that flowed at pleasant sounds." 9. Cormac attacking the Spirit of the Waters. "He rushed among the waves to find the son of the wind: three youths guide the bounding bark. He stood with the sword and shield. When the low-hung vapour past, he took it by the curling head, and searched its dark womb with his steel: the son of the wind forsook the air." 10. The Death of Cormac. "Why comest thou in thy arms to Temora, Cairbar of the gloomy brow? He passed on in his darkness, and seized the hand of the king. Cormac foresaw his death." 11. Scandinavian Wizards making Incantations. "Near is the circle of Loda with the stone of power, where spirits descend by night in dark-red streams of fire: *there*, mixed with the murmur of the waters, rose the voice of aged men; they call the forms of night to aid them in their war." 12. Fingal engaging the Spirit of Loda. "The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose upon the wind." Such are the passages which this bold artist has endeavoured to embody: that of Agandecca is reckoned the best. It is commended for anatomical skill, as well as intrepidity of design.

This was hailed as an original and a national work; and though deficient in that fine majesty which belongs to the epic in art, and imperfect too in drawing, and not more than natural in colour, it is without question entitled to be ranked with compositions of a poetic order. While engaged on this work, he painted "The Ascension" on the ceiling over the altar of the Episcopal Chapel in the Cowgate of Edinburgh,—a composition which

he himself ranked next to "The Hall of Ossian;" — but which, speaking from recollection, I should say is at once wild and ungraceful. He painted also "King Lear;" a picture in which his friends perceived all the poet's feeling and fire; and "Andromeda," which they compared for richness of colour to the works of Titian and Correggio. Patrons and critics have ever a ready way of summing up the leading merits of any new performance. Thus, in the picture of "The Princess Nausicaa and her Nymphs surprised at the river-side by Ulysses," which Runciman painted for Pennycuick, one judge perceived the "fine drawing" of Julio Romano; a second saw the "deep juicy lustre" of Tintoretto; and a third beheld "a feeling and an air altogether the painter's own." He prided himself much on his picture of "Agrippina landing with the Ashes of Germanicus;" a subject suggested by George the Third to Benjamin West.* He exhibited some pictures in London in the year 1772; but all that is remembered of him is, that he took up his quarters with the widow of Hogarth, who was in those days reduced to let lodgings for subsistence. He etched several of his own paintings: one of them, "Sigismunda weeping over the Heart of Tancred," is still in request with collectors. I enquired of a dealer in the article what its merits were? "It is five inches and a half by three inches and

* By the by, Mr. West represented his majesty as having read to him the account of the event from Livy — not knowing that the passage was contained in the lost books of the historian.

a quarter, — a rare gem, I assure you, sir." Another of his etchings, "The Netherbow Port of Edinburgh," is in no common spirit and taste. The original picture has found a sanctuary in the fine collection of the Marquis of Stafford. Concerning his life, whatever more is known may be briefly added: the disorder contracted while painting the Pennycuick cupola grew worse and worse — his looks faded — he walked with difficulty, — yet no one thought his hour was so nigh, when, on the 21st of October, 1785, he dropped down at the door of his lodgings in West Nicholson Street, and expired without a groan, in the 49th year of his age.

Of the character of the painter as a man, and his merits as an artist, there are various opinions. A friend, in whose judgment I have much confidence, though inclined to be sarcastic, thus writes to me: — "My father was acquainted with Runciman, whose sketches, I think, are infinitely better than his pictures. Look at his etchings, and remember his gallery at Pennycuick, and then judge if I am severe — such long legs, such distorted attitudes, and such a total want of knowledge or contempt of drapery! I always thought I saw Runciman revived in Fuseli. My father said he was a dissolute, blasphemous fellow, and repeated some of his sayings, which are better forgotten than remembered. His mother was a most respectable, well-educated woman; her good sense and good manners made every body admire her." A gentler picture is given by one of his biographers: — "He was remarkable for a candour and a simplicity of manners, and possessed a

happy talent for conversation, which caused his company to be courted by some of the most eminent literary characters of his time. Hume, Robertson, Kames, and Monboddo, were among the number of his frequent visiters. But his real worth and goodness of heart were best known to his most intimate friends, who had access to him at all times. Nor was he less remarkable for his readiness in communicating information and advice to young artists, in order to further their improvement in the arts." These stories may seem inconsistent enough; Runciman, however, might live in social intercourse with divines and philosophers, and yet be wild in his conversation when among more lax companions; nay, he might indulge in many indiscretions of wit and humour, without seriously wishing to insult the feelings of the devout, or impugn the Christian creed. But, surely, such themes are better avoided by men whose learning cannot enable them to go

> " To the height of that great argument;"

and the wittiest of the wits would be wise in feeling, with the poet, that

> " An atheist-laugh 's a poor exchange
> For Deity offended."

Concerning the merits of Runciman as a painter, there are, as we have said, sundry opinions. By those who have settled that we can have no true art without the nicest delicacy of academic drawing, — that any departure from perfectly just and natural action is a crime inexpiable — that fluttering, scanty, ill-arranged

draperies are sure marks of feebleness — and that a style of colouring, partaking of the extravagance of all these errors, indicates want of talent as surely as of taste,— the works of Runciman will, without question, be ranked among the crude attempts of arrogant imbecility. Those, however, who examine his pieces with a wish to find beauties rather than faults, will not look in vain. Certainly true genius for art is present in most of his performances. Brown, his scholar and his friend, an able artist, and one who could think and feel for himself, thus writes regarding the merits of his master:—"His fancy was fertile, his discernment of character keen, his taste truly elegant, and his conceptions always great. Though his genius seems to be best suited to the grand and serious, yet many of his works amply prove that he could move with equal success in the less elevated line of the gay and the pleasing. His chief excellence was composition, the noblest part of the art, in which it is doubtful whether he had any living superior. With regard to the truth, the harmony, the richness, and the gravity of colouring,— in that style, in short, which is the peculiar characteristic of the ancient Venetian, and the direct contrast of the modern English school, he was unrivalled. His works, it must be granted, like all those of the present times, were far from being perfect; but it was Runciman's peculiar misfortune, that his defects were of such a nature as to be obvious to the most unskilful eye, whilst his beauties were of a kind which few have sufficient taste or knowledge in the art to discern, far less to appreciate." We

concur in much of what his friend has said; but to have great defects which are obvious to the vulgar, and great beauties which are only visible to the few, is, to say the least, an unfortunate arrangement.

COPLEY.

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, painter of "The Death of Chatham," "King Charles ordering the Arrest of the Five Members of Parliament," and "The Death of Major Peirson," has as yet had no biographer; and what I am now about to relate of him is gathered from the memories of his companions in art, the affection of his descendants, and the imperfect authority of fugitive references and Academy catalogues. He was the son of John Copley and Mary Singleton his wife; and was, by the most credible accounts, born at Boston in America, on the third day of July, 1737. His father was of English descent, had resided long in Ireland, and after marrying a lady of that country, removed to the New World, so nigh the time that his son was born as to countenance a report which prevailed, when he became eminent, that he was a native of Ireland. The fact that he was all along *claimed* as an American by the general rumour of the United States, might, perhaps, have been alleged to prove little — since, in a country constantly receiving, and willingly adopting, new citizens from all quarters, considerable looseness as to such a point might be considered as natural. John Scolloy, of Boston, however, appears to fur-

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF LORD LYNDH[illegible]

Published by John Murray Albemarle Street 1832.

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J. S. COPLEY, R.A.

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF LORD LYNDHURST

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nish distinct evidence, when writing to the painter in 1782: he says — "I trust, amidst this blaze of prosperity, that you don't forget your dear native country, and the cause it is engaged in, which I know lay once near your heart, and I trust does so still." Other proofs will, perhaps, occur as we proceed.

In whatever country he was born, he was educated in America; and to her he owes his first inspiration in art. This came upon him, it seems, early enough: when some seven or eight years old, he was observed to absent himself from the family circle for several hours at a time, and was traced to a lonely room, on whose bare walls he had drawn, in charcoal, a group of martial figures, engaged in some nameless adventure. Boston, at this period, had neither academy of arts nor private instructors. Copley had therefore to educate himself — a task, after all, not so difficult to genius as the dull imagine, — and which he set about undismayed, in the absence of models and masters. It is noteworthy, that, almost at the same hour, America produced, amid her deserts and her trading villages, two distinguished painters, West and Copley; who, unknown to each other, were schooling themselves in the rudiments of art, attempting portraits of their friends one day, and historical composition the other; studying nature from the naked Apollos of the wilderness, as some one called the native warriors; and making experiments on all manner of colours, primitive and compound; in short, groping, through inspiration, the right way to eminence and fame. Of Copley's very early works no better account

can be rendered, than that they were chiefly portraits and domestic groups, to which the wild wood scenery of America usually formed backgrounds. I once heard an artist say that the fame of a fine painter, who lived in Boston, found its way to England as early as the year 1760: no name was mentioned; and this, he said, was the more impressed on his mind, because of a painting of a "Boy and a tame Squirrel," which came without any letter or artist's name, to one of the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy; and when its natural action and the deep vivid colouring made the Academicians anxious to give it a good place, they were at a loss what to say about it in the catalogue, but, from the frame on which it was stretched being American pine, they called the work American. The surmise was just; it was a portrait by Copley of his half-brother, Harry Pelham, and of such excellence as naturally raised high expectations.

In 1767, when Copley was thirty years old, we find him well known to the admirers of art on both sides of the Atlantic: he was then a constant exhibiter in the British Royal Academy; was earning a decent subsistence by his art among the citizens of Boston; had proved, too, that praise was sweet and censure bitter; and was, moreover, sighing for a sight of the Sistine chapel, and talking of the great masters. He thus sets forth his feelings in a letter to Captain Bruce, a gentleman of some taste, who seems to have been an admirer of the works of Copley — "I would gladly exchange my situation for the serene climate of Italy, or even that of England; but

what would be the advantage of seeking improvement at such an outlay of time and money. I am now in as good business as the poverty of this place will admit. I make as much as if I were a Raphael or a Correggio; and three hundred guineas a year, my present income, is equal to nine hundred a year in London. With regard to reputation, you are sensible that fame cannot be durable where pictures are confined to sitting rooms, and regarded only for the resemblance they bear to their originals. Were I sure of doing as well in Europe as here, I would not hesitate a moment in my choice; but I might in the experiment waste a thousand pounds and two years of my time, and have to return baffled to America. Then I should have to take my mother with me, who is ailing: she does not, however, seem averse to cross the salt water once more; but my failure would oblige me to recross the sea again. My ambition whispers me to run this risk; and I think the time draws nigh that must determine my future fortune." In something of the same strain and nearly at the same time Copley wrote to his countryman West, then in high favour at the British court. "You will see by the two pictures I have lately sent to your Exhibition, what improvement I may still make, and what encouragement I may reasonably expect. I must beg, however, that you will not suffer your benevolent wishes for my welfare to induce you to think more favourably of my works than they deserve. To give you a further opportunity of judging, I shall send over to your care for the Exhibition the portrait of a

gentleman, now nearly finished: the owner will be in London at the same time. If your answer should be in favour of my visit to Europe, I must beg of you to send it as soon as you can, otherwise I must abide here another year, when my mother might be so infirm as to be unable to accompany me; and I cannot think of leaving her. Your friendly invitation to your house, and your offer to propose me as a member of the Society, are matters which I shall long remember."

What the answers of Bruce and West were, I have not been able to learn: but it is to be supposed they still left it a matter of uncertainty, whether it would be more profitable to go to London or remain in Boston. Success the wisest head cannot ensure: sensible and prudent mediocrity frequently wins what true genius cannot obtain — the race of reputation is, in short, the most slippery and uncertain of all races. As seven years elapsed from this time till he finally set sail for Italy, we must suppose that Copley was busy extending his fame with his pencil, and hoarding his earnings for the outlay of travel and study. He had, as he acknowledged to West, as many commissions in Boston as he could execute. The price for his half lengths was fourteen guineas; and he also executed many likenesses in crayons: he was, therefore, waxing comparatively rich. He was not one of those inconsiderate enthusiasts, who rashly run into undertakings which promise no certain return. He had laboured as students seldom labour now for his knowledge, and for the remuneration which it brought; and he was wise not to commit his all to the waters of

the Atlantic. He had continued a bachelor, according to the precept of Reynolds, that he might be able to pursue his studies without offering up his time and money at the altar of that expensive idol, a wife; and he had sent over various pictures, chiefly portraits in fancy postures and employments, with the hope of finding customers for them in the English market. He thus writes to Captain Bruce: "Both my brother's portrait and the little girl's, or either of them, I am quite willing to part with, should any one incline to purchase them, at such a price as you may think proper." I have not heard that he held any further consultations with Captains or Academicians, respecting his studies in Europe: the growing discord in America was a sharp sword that urged him onward; so, in 1774, having arranged his affairs, left a number of paintings in the custody of his mother, and put in his pocket enough of his winnings for a three years' campaign in the Old World, he set sail for Italy, by the way of England.

In London he found few friends, and many counsellors; and left it for Rome, August 26th, 1774. It was his misfortune to choose for his companion an artist of the name of Carter: a captious, cross-grained, and self-conceited person, who kept a regular journal of his tour, in which he remorselessly set down the smallest trifle that could bear a construction unfavourable to the American's character. A few specimens may amuse the reader, *e. g.* — "This compapanion of mine is rather a singular character; he seems happy at taking things at the wrong end;

and laboured near an hour to-day to prove that a huckaback towel was softer than a Barcelona silk handkerchief." . . . . . "My agreeable companion suspects he has got cold upon his lungs. He is now sitting by a fire, the heat of which makes me very faint; a silk handkerchief about his head, and a white pocket one about his neck, applying fresh fuel, and complaining that the wood of this country don't give half the heat that the wood of America does; and has just finished a long-winded discourse upon the merits of an American wood-fire, in preference to one of our coal. He has never asked me yet, and we have been up an hour, how I do, or how I have passed the night: 'tis an engaging creature." Upon another occasion one traveller wishes to walk, the other is determined to ride, and they stop in a shower to debate it. "We had a very warm altercation, and I was constrained to tell him, 'Sir, we are now more than eight hundred miles from home, through all which way you have not had a single care that I could alleviate; I have taken as much pains as to the mode of conveying you, as if you had been my wife; and I cannot help telling you, that she, though a delicate little woman, accommodated her feelings to her situation with much more temper than you have done.'" . . . . "There is nothing that he is not master of. On asking him to-day what they called that weed in America, pointing to some fern; he said he knew it very well; there was a deal of it in America, but he had never heard its name." . . . . . "My companion is solacing himself, that if they go on in America for an hun-

dred years to come, as they have for an hundred and fifty years past, they shall have an independent government: the woods will be cleared, and, lying in the same latitude, they shall have the same air as in the south of France; art would then be encouraged there, and great artists would arise." These ill matched fellow-voyagers, soon after their arrival in Rome, separated; and Carter closes with the following kind description of Copley, as he appeared on the road in his travelling trim: — "He had on one of those white French bonnets which, turned on one side, admit of being pulled over the ears: under this was a yellow and red silk handkerchief, with a large Catherine wheel flambeaued upon it, such as may be seen upon the necks of those delicate ladies who cry Malton oysters: this flowed half way down his back. He wore a red-brown, or rather cinnamon, great coat, with a friar's cape, and worsted binding of a yellowish white: it hung near his heels, out of which peeped his boots: under his arm he carried the sword which he bought in Paris, and a hiccory stick with an ivory head. Joined to this dress, he was very thin, pale, a little pock-marked, prominent eye-brows, small eyes, which, after fatigue, seemed a day's march in his head."

Copley was, no doubt, glad to be relieved from the company of a man who was peevish without ill health; who, with his smattering of Italian, continually crowed over one who could only speak English; who constantly contradicted him in company; and, finally, caricatured him when they parted. Our painter, in speaking afterwards of his *bore*, said "he was a sort of snail which

crawled over a man in his sleep, and left its slime and no more."

Of Copley's proceedings in Rome we have no account; but we find him writing thus by May, 1775: — "Having seen the Roman school, and the wonderful efforts of genius exhibited by Grecian artists, I now wish to see the Venetian and Flemish schools: there is a kind of luxury in seeing, as well as there is in eating and drinking, the more we indulge, the less are we to be restrained; and indulgence in art, I think innocent and laudable. I have not one letter to any person in all my intended route, and I may miss the most beautiful things; I beg you, therefore, to assist and advise me. I propose to leave Rome about the 20th of May; go to Florence, Parma, Mantua, Venice, Inspruck, Augsburgh, Stuttgardt, Manheim, Coblentz, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Leyden, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Lille, Paris, London. The only considerable stay which I intend to make will be at Parma, to copy the fine Correggio. Art is in its utmost perfection here; a mind susceptible of the fine feelings which art is calculated to excite, will find abundance of pleasure in this country. The Apollo, the Laocoön, &c. leave nothing for the human mind to wish for; more cannot be effected by the genius of man than what is happily combined in those miracles of the chisel."

No memorial remains of what he said or did in the route marked out in this letter, save the copy of the Parma Correggio. His imitation is in England, and may be compared, without injury

to his name, with any copies made by his brethren of the British school.

In the latter end of the year 1775, Copley reached London; and set up his easel, 25. George Street, Hanover Square. West was as good as his word: he introduced him to the Academy; in 1777 he became an associate; and in February, 1783, we find the King sanctioning his election as a Royal Academician.

By this time Copley's name had been established by works of eminent merit; among the first of which was "The Death of Chatham." The chief excellence of this picture is the accurate delineation of that impressive event, and the vast number of noble heads, all portraits, with which the House of Lords is thronged; its chief fault is an air of formality, and a deficiency of deep feeling: yet, it must be owned, that those who are near the dying statesman are sufficiently moved. All lords could not feel alike;—some seem standing for their portraits; some seem anxious about their places; and others, from their looks, may be supposed inwardly rejoicing that Death, having struck the head of the administration, seems satisfied with his prey. Praise poured in upon the successful painter from all quarters; no people were more pleased than his old companions in America; and many letters were addressed to him from grave and aged persons.—"I delight," said the venerable Mathew Byles, of Boston, "in the fame you have acquired: and I delight in being ranked amongst your earliest friends." No one, it may be believed, rejoiced more than his mother. She was now very old,

feeble in body, sinking silently to the grave; had suffered in peace of mind, and in property, during the war of separation; but what she lamented most were the interruptions which took place in the correspondence with her son: private letters were sometimes detained by the government, and she was months without the solace of his handwriting. It appears, too, that her circumstances were far from affluent; and it must be related to the honour of all concerned, that she made no complaint, and that her son did not forget her, or any of his relatives, amidst all his prosperity.

The fame which Copley acquired, and the value which he put upon this noble picture, brought him, along with many friends, a few detractors. To have refused 1500 guineas, was, in the sight of some, offence enough; nor was this forgotten, when some time afterwards the fame of the painting was revived by a splendid engraving of large size, of which no less than five and twenty hundred impressions were sold in a very few weeks. He was advised to exhibit the picture; and naturally preferring the time when the town is fullest, hired a room, and announced his intention, without reflecting that the Royal Academy Exhibition was about to open. He met with unexpected opposition. Sir William Chambers remonstrated: — the room which was chosen belonged to the King; it was his duty, he said, to protect the interests of the Royal Academy, which were sure to suffer from such partial exhibitions; and he interposed, lest the world should think that the King, who had aided and

protected the Academy, now countenanced an exhibition injurious to its welfare, and contrary to the spirit and rules of the Institution. This, Copley thought a little too autocratic in the architect, who, moreover, had not hesitated to embitter his opposition by most gratuitous incivilities. Those who desire to know how men of eminence in art addressed each other in the year 1781, may consult the conclusion of Sir William's epistle: — "No one wishes Mr. Copley greater success, nor is more sensible of his merit, than his humble servant; who, if he may be allowed to give his opinion, thinks no place so proper as the Royal Exhibition to promote either the sale of prints, or the raffle for the picture, which he understands are Mr. Copley's motives: or, if that should be objected to, he thinks no place so proper as Mr. Copley's own house, where the idea of a raree-show will not be quite so striking as in any other place, and where his own presence will not fail to be of service to his views." The painter was much incensed by this language, and had some intention, when he moved his picture to another place, of stating publicly the cause of this vexatious change: he did, however, what many wise men do — having vented his wrath and sarcasm on paper in the morning, he sweetened the bitterness of the invective a little at mid-day, laughed at the whole affair in the evening, and threw the satire into the fire before he went to bed. The picture was so much admired, that the artist was emboldened to have an engraving made from it of unusual size, viz. thirty inches long and twenty-

two inches and a half high, by the hand of Bartolozzi.

When this great plate was finished, he was remembered by all those to whom he had happened to give offence; more particularly by those who were envious of his success. They spread a report every where, that he had fraudulently withheld from his subscribers the early impressions to which the order of signatures entitled them. This audacious calumny was promptly refuted: four gentlemen of taste and talent, one of them Edmund Malone, took up the cause of their injured friend, and proved to the satisfaction of the public—first, that Bartolozzi received 2000*l.* for the plate; secondly, that the number of subscribers, from April 1780, to August 1782, amounted to 1750; thirdly, that 2438 impressions were taken in all; fourthly, that 320 proofs were struck from the plate; and, finally, that the impressions were delivered to the subscribers according to the order of subscription. The approbation of many good judges compensated for the pain which this rumour occasioned: he could not but feel gratified with the united thanks of Washington and Adams, to whom he had presented two of the prints:—"This work," says the former, "highly valuable in itself, is rendered more estimable in my eye, when I remember that America gave birth to the celebrated artist who produced it."—"I shall preserve my copy," said the latter, "both as a token of your friendship, and as an indubitable proof of American genius."

At this time historical painting seemed to have

a chance of taking a hold on public affection: the King patronised it openly: several dignitaries of the Church, and sundry noblemen, obeyed their own taste, or the example of the throne, and ordered pictures; and, finally, Alderman Boydell entered into a covenant with a number of the Academicians to unite their talents, and form a gallery of English works in the manner of some of those in foreign lands: we have stated this more fully elsewhere; at present it is sufficient to say that Copley was one of the select, and that various subjects presented themselves to his fancy: 1. — The Assassination of Buckingham; 2. Charles signing Strafford's Death-Warrant; 3. Charles addressing the Citizens of London; 4. The Five impeached Members brought in Triumph to Westminster; 5. The Speaker of the Commons thanks the City Sheriffs for protecting the Five impeached Members; 6. The Members of the House of Commons appear before the Army on Hounslow; 7. London sends six Aldermen to General Monk, and submits; 8. The Lord Mayor presenting a Gold Cup to Monk; 9. The General conducts the Members back to Westminster Hall; 10. The King's Escape from Hampton Court. It must be confessed that some of these themes smack of Bow bells and Cheapside; they were probably suggested to Copley by the worthy Alderman, who was anxious to honour his predecessors, in the hope of not being forgotten himself. While this list was under consideration, an event happened, in the course of the war, which furnished a subject of more immediate interest.

The French invaded Jersey; stormed St. Helliers; took the commander prisoner, and compelled him to sign the surrender of the island. Major Peirson, a youth of twenty-four, refused to yield — collected some troops — charged the invaders with equal courage and skill — defeated them with much effusion of blood; but fell himself in the moment of victory, not by a random shot, but by a ball aimed deliberately at him by a French officer, who fell in his turn, shot through the heart by the African servant of the dying victor. It is enough to say in praise of any work, that it is worthy of such a scene. The first print I ever saw was from this picture: it was engraved by Heath; and equals in dimensions that of "The Death of Chatham." I was very young, not ten years old; but the scene has ever since been present to my fancy. I thought then, what I think still, on looking at the original — that it is stamped with true life and heroism: there is nothing mean, nothing little, — the fierce fight, the affrighted women, the falling warrior, and the avenging of his death, are all there: the story is finely told. This picture was painted for Boydell: long afterwards, when his gallery was dispersed, it was purchased back by Copley, and is now in the keeping of his distinguished son, Lord Lyndhurst.

His next subject was a much more magnificent one, but too vast and varied perhaps: the repulse and defeat of the Spanish floating batteries at Gibraltar. The common council of London commissioned this picture for their hall; and they gave ample space and verge enough, wherein to trace

the beleaguered rock and its fiery assailants; viz. a panel twenty-five feet long and twenty-two feet and a half high. In this great picture, as in his others, he introduced many portraits: the gallant Lord Heathfield himself is foremost in the scene of death; and near him appear Sir Robert Boyd, Sir William Green, chief engineer, and others, to the amount of a dozen or fifteen. The fire of the artillery has slackened; the floating batteries, on whose roofs thirteen-inch shells and showers of thirty-two pound balls had fallen harmless, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, are now sending up flames on all sides; whilst their mariners are leaping in scores into the sea. The scene of desolation is certainly grand. There is, however, a want of true perspective: the defenders of the rock are like the children of Anak; the perishing mariners at the very line where the sea washes the defences of stone are less than ordinary mortals. The figures have been charged with looking more formal and stiff than nature. This may be too severe — but on the whole I cannot class the piece with his happiest works. I may mention here a work bequeathed by Copley to that noble institution, Christ's Hospital School, painted early in his career, and representing the escape of Brooke Watson, when a sea-boy, from a shark. He was bathing at Havannah; a shark seized his foot and snapped it off, and was about to devour him, when a seaman struck the monster between the eyes with a heavy boat-hook and saved his companion. The terror of the boy — the fury of the fish — and the resolution of

the mariner, are well represented; while the agitated water in which the scene is laid seems bloody.

Subjects from British history and British poetry were what Copley chiefly found pleasure in. The first Installation of the Order of Saint Patrick seemed to him a subject worthy of the pencil; and Edmund Malone readily aided him with his knowledge; and the Irish nobility, with but one exception or so, offered to give him the advantage of their faces, so that the whole might bear the true image of the green isle. Of this projected work the painter thus speaks: "I think it a magnificent subject for painting; and my desire is to treat it in an historic style, and make it a companion to the picture of Lord Chatham: filling the whole with the portraits of the knights and other great characters. The idea originated with myself; and I mean to paint it on my own account, and publish a print from it of the same size as that of Chatham." This was a vain imagination — the King approved of the work: the nobility of Ireland promised to sit for their portraits, though one of them, Lord Inchiquin I think, declared sitting for one's portrait to be a punishment almost unendurable; but, somehow, here the matter stopped, and the first Installation of the Order of St. Patrick is yet to be painted.

It ought to be mentioned, that Copley, amid all his historical works, continued to paint portraits, and had in that way considerable employment. Among others he took the likeness of Lord Mansfield; and has left us a very fine family group of himself, his wife, and his children: the

hands are well proportioned; there is much nature in the looks of the whole, and some very fine colouring.

A portrait painter in large practice might write a pretty book on the vanity and singularity of his sitters. A certain man came to Copley, and had himself, his wife, and seven children, all included in a family piece: — "It wants but one thing," said he, "and that is the portrait of my first wife — for this one is my second." — "But," said the artist, "she is dead, you know, sir: what can I do; she is only to be admitted as an angel." — "Oh, no! not at all," answered the other; "she must come in as a woman — no angels for me." The portrait was added, but some time elapsed before the person came back: when he returned he had a stranger lady on his arm. "I must have another cast of your hand, Copley," he said: "an accident befell my second wife; this lady is my third, and she is come to have her likeness included in the family picture." The painter complied — the likeness was introduced — and the husband looked with a glance of satisfaction on his three spouses: not so the lady; she remonstrated; never was such a thing heard of — out her predecessors must go. The artist painted them out accordingly; and had to bring an action at law to obtain payment for the portraits which he had obliterated.

The mind of Copley teemed with large pictures: he had hardly failed in his Irish subject before he resolved to try an English one, viz. the

Arrest of the Five Members of the Commons by Charles the First. Malone, an indefatigable friend, supplied the historical information, and gave a list of the chief men whose faces ought to be introduced. It was the good fortune of the eminent men of those days, both Cavaliers and Roundheads, that their portraits had chiefly been taken by the inimitable Vandyke: all that had to be done, therefore, was to collect these heads, and paint his picture from them. They were, it is true, scattered east, west, north, and south: but no sooner was Copley's undertaking publicly announced, than pictures came from all quarters; and it is a proof of his name and fame that such treasures were placed in his hands with the most unlimited confidence. The labour which this picture required must have been immense; besides the grouping, the proper distribution of parts, and the passion and varied feelings of the scene, he had some fifty-eight likenesses to make, of a size corresponding with his design. The point of time chosen is when the King having demanded if Hampden, Pym, Hollis, Hazelrig, and Strode were present, Lenthall the speaker replies, — "I have, sir, neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me." The scene is one of deep interest, and the artist has handled it with considerable skill and knowledge. The head I like best is the dark and enthusiastic Sir Harry Vane; the Cromwell is comparatively a failure. Many have left their seats dismayed; while fear, and anger, and indignation have thrown the

whole into natural groupings: the picture was much talked of when it appeared, and deserves to be remembered still.

There has always been a difficulty in disposing of historical pictures in this country; and no one was doomed to experience it more than Copley: no customer made his appearance for Charles and the impeached Members. I know not whether the following remarkable letter, from a wealthy peer, arose from his own enquiries, or from an offer made by the artist; the letter, however, is genuine, and proves that they err who imagine that the spirit of bargaining is confined to mercantile men: —

"Lord Ferrers's compliments to Mr. Copley; he cannot form any judgment of the picture; but, as money is scarce, and any one may make eight per cent. of their money in the funds, and particularly in navy bills, and there is so much gaming, he hopes he'll excuse his valuing his picture in conformity to the times, and not think he depreciates in the least from Mr. Copley's just merit; but if he reckons fifty-seven figures, there are not above one third that are capital, but are only heads or a little more; and therefore he thinks, according to the present times, if he gets nine hundred pounds for the picture with the frame, after the three other figures are put in, and it is completely finished, and he has the power of taking a copy, it is pretty near the value: that is what very few people can afford to give for a picture. However, if Mr. Copley would undertake to do a family piece for him

with about six figures, about the size of the picture he has of Mr. Wright's, with frame and all, he would agree to give him a thousand guineas for the two pictures. But he imagines the Emperor or some of the Royal Family may give him more, perhaps a great deal more, which he wishes they may, and thinks he well deserves; but if he can't make a better bargain, Lord Ferrers will stand to what he says, and give him six months to consider of it, and will not take it amiss if he sells it for ever so little more than he has mentioned, as he has stretched to the utmost of his purse, though he does not think he has come near up to Mr. Copley's merit.

"Upper Seymour Street, 5th June, 1791."

Copley felt himself so much obliged to Malone for historical help, that he made a public acknowledgment of it; but he seemed not to be aware that he had received invisible help before, both in America and England. The person who had done this good deed was Lord Buchan; and, lest the painter should go to the grave in ignorance of the name of his benefactor, he addressed this characteristic note from Dryburgh: — "You are now the father of my list in the charming art of perpetuating or greatly extending the impressions received by the most spiritual of our external senses from living forms. I take pride to myself in having been the first, with your 'Boy and Squirrel,' and your excellent character from the other side of the Atlantic, to make you properly known to the illustrious Pitt, to whom in his particular department there has been found no equal." This

northern lord lived, and, I hear, died, in the belief that he was the great support of literature and patron of art. But, though the elder brother of two men of wit and genius, he was, in fact, in every possible respect, saving his coronet, a *nobody*.

No artist was ever more ready than Copley to lend his pencil to celebrate passing events; the defeat of De Winter by Duncan was now celebrated in a picture, exhibiting considerable skill in depicting maritime movements, and containing in all twelve portraits. He is not, however, so happy at sea as on land; indeed, a naval battle is conducted on such mathematical principles, that no human ingenuity seems capable of infusing poetic beauty into the scene. When we have seen the sides, and the prow, and the stern, of a ship, we have seen all; their tiers of guns, their masts, their rigging, and their mode of fighting, are all alike. The battle of La Hogue is the best of all the pieces of this class; yet a distinguished officer once called it, in my hearing, a splendid confusion; and declared if the painter had commanded the fleet, and conducted it so, he would have been soundly thrashed. When Nelson fell at Trafalgar, West dipped his brush in historic paint — Copley did the same; the former finished his picture, the latter but planned his. The tide of taste had set in against compositions of that extent and character: more youthful adventurers were making their appearance. Lawrence, Beechey, and Shee, with their splendid portraitures—Stothard, with his poetic pictures — and Turner, with his magical landscape, began to appear in the van;

and, at seventy years of age, nature admonished Copley to cease thinking of the public, and prepare for a higher tribunal. He had still, however, energy sufficient to send works from his easel to the Exhibition; amongst which were portraits of the Earl of Northampton, Baron Graham, Viscount Dudley and Ward, Lord Sidmouth, the Prince of Wales at a review, attended by Lord Heathfield, and other military worthies. His last work was "The Resurrection;" and with this his labours closed, unless we except a portrait of his son, Lord Lyndhurst, painted in 1814. An American gentleman applied to him for information and materials to compose a narrative of his life: he felt a reluctance, which all must feel, about complying with such a request; and while he was hesitating, death interposed. He died 9th September, 1815, aged seventy-eight years.

Those who desire to know the modes of study, the peculiar habits, the feelings and opinions, likings and dislikings, of Copley, cannot, I fear, be gratified. No one lives now who could tell us of his early days, when the boy, on the wild shores of America, achieved works of surpassing beauty; he is but remembered in his declining years, when the world had sobered down his mood, and the ecstasy of the blood was departed. He has been represented to me by some as a peevish and peremptory man, while others describe him as mild and unassuming. Man has many moods, and they have all, I doubt not, spoken the truth of their impressions. I can depend more upon the authority which says, he was fond of books, a lover of history, and well acquainted with poetry,

especially the divine works of Milton. These he preferred to exercise either on foot or on horseback, when labour at the easel was over — and this bookish turn has been talked of as injurious to his health; but no one has much right to complain of shortness of years, who lives to see out threescore and eighteen.

He sometimes made experiments in colours: the methods of the Greeks, the elder Italians, and the schools of Florence and Venice, he was long in quest of; and he wrote out receipts for composing those lustrous hues in which Titian and Correggio excelled. For the worth of his discoveries, read not his receipts, but look at his works; of all that he ever painted, nothing surpasses his "Boy and Squirrel" for fine depth and beauty of colour; and this was done, I presume, before he had heard the name of Titian pronounced. His "Samuel reproving Saul for sparing the People of Amalek," is likewise a fine bit of colouring, with good feeling and good drawing too. I have only this to add to what has been already said of his works; he shares with West the reproach of want of natural warmth — and uniting much stateliness with little passion. As to his personal character, it seems to have been, in all essential respects, that of an honourable and accomplished gentleman.

Copley's eminent son still inhabits the artist's house in George Street, Hanover Square; and all must consider it as honourable to this noble person, that he has made it his object to collect works of his father's pencil wherewith to adorn the apartments in which they were conceived and produced.

MORTIMER.

JOHN HAMILTON MORTIMER was born in the year 1741, but in what month none of his biographers have mentioned. He was the youngest of four children, two of whom were daughters. His father, originally a miller — or, as the admirers of the painter write it, the proprietor of a mill — and, according to the same authorities, the lineal descendant of Mortimer, Earl of March — became a collector of the customs at Eastbourne, in Sussex, where he lived in good repute, and acquired the means of giving his sons a respectable education, and of assisting their advance in life. A love of art belonged to the family. The collector's brother, a wandering adventurer, who went from vale to vale, and from town to town, limning faces and landscapes for his subsistence, left many drawings; and, moreover, an altar-piece in Aylesbury church representing our Lord's Supper. These works — of a low order as they were — had an early influence on the mind of Mortimer; he studied them and copied them, and carrying his speculations farther, began to form original designs from nature and from fancy: his attempts attracted the notice of his father,

who, perceiving his inclination, and perhaps his genius, consented that he should try his fortune in the precarious department of the pencil. The application of a friend, and a premium of a hundred pounds, placed him in the studio of the once famous Hudson.

Mortimer was some eighteen or nineteen years old when he arrived in London. Sir J. Reynolds had more than commenced that career which ended so gloriously for his name, and other artists were making their appearance compared to whom Hudson was but a dauber; we may therefore wonder why he was not placed in some more gifted man's studio. The fame of Hudson was, perhaps, still highest in the provinces; in those days reputation travelled more slowly than now, and the rising sun of Reynolds might not yet have eclipsed that of his old master in the opinion of the people of Eastbourne. Mortimer's first object was to acquire the art of colouring; in drawing he had already made good progress, and the class of subjects to which he wished to dedicate his mind had been early fixed. Bred on the sea-coast, and amid a daring and rugged race of hereditary smugglers, it had pleased his young imagination to walk on the shore when the sea was agitated by storms — to seek out the most sequestered places among the woods and rocks; and frequently, and not without danger, to witness the intrepidity of the contraband adventurers, who, in spite of storms and armed excisemen, pursued their precarious trade, at all hazards. In this way he had from boyhood become familiar with what amateurs of art call

"Salvator Rosa looking scenes:" he loved to depict the sea chafed and foaming, and fit "to swallow navigation up," ships in peril, and pinnaces sinking; banditti plundering, or reposing in caverns, and all such situations as are familiar to pirates on water and outlaws on land. To this rough sea-coast academy much of that peculiarity which marks the works of Mortimer may be traced; with a certain dash of savage grandeur, it communicated to his style a wild freedom unknown at that period in the productions of the English school.

He soon discovered that little could be learned from Hudson, who to ignorance in his profession added rude and unconciliating manners. These contributed to drive Mortimer, after a short experiment, to the studio of Pine, considered in those days a capital colourist. But he did not remain long even there: he perceived that in working under the opinion and control of another, he was losing his own original mode of execution, — that his hand was acquiring a style of a composite kind, and, what was worse, that he was habituating his mind to servility. He who aspires after true fame must never put his head and hand under the control of another. Mortimer now studied more patiently, and with more profit, in the gallery of antique figures opened by the liberality of the Duke of Richmond. This he called his dead school; the school on the shores of Sussex was his living one — and in both he laboured with such success that he gained the notice of Cipriani and Moser, who represented him in such a favourable light

to the peer, that he desired much to have retained him on his establishment for the purpose of painting, as was the fashion of those days, the galleries, and walls, and ceilings of some of his houses. To have subjects dictated and spaces defined, and to be painting under a patron's eye at so much per annum, was unpleasing to one who wished to think for himself, and work when it suited his convenience; the offer was politely declined. The Society for the Encouragement of Arts awarded him several premiums for drawings made from the figures in the Richmond Gallery. "Soon after," says Edwards, in his Anecdotes of Painting, "he was admitted a member of the private academy in St. Martin's Lane. In those seminaries he acquired very considerable knowledge of the human figure, which he drew in a style superior to most of his contemporaries."

The reputation, which all allow that Mortimer about this time suddenly acquired, has been ascribed by the biographers to the picture of Edward the Confessor seizing the Treasures of his Mother, which, in the opinion of Reynolds, excelled the rival painting by Romney so decidedly as to entitle him to the premium of fifty guineas. The tradition of the studios, however, ascribes his first great start in fame to a source more romantic, or at least accidental. It was the fashion in those days for painters to be largely employed in embellishing ceilings, and walls, and furniture; and it may be remembered that the coach of Sir Joshua Reynolds had the seasons painted on the panels: now the state coach which was to convey the King to the house of lords re-

quired repair, and Mortimer was called in by the coach-maker to ornament the panels; which he did so successfully, that the people, who crowded to see their young sovereign, bestowed equal attention on the Battle of Agincourt painted on the carriage. The King, it is added, was so much pleased, that he caused the panel to be taken out and preserved, and extended his notice to Mortimer. To this incident is imputed the King's anxiety for the painter's admission into the Royal Academy. His success in the contest with Romney, however, whether this story of the panel be true or not, made him more widely known, and inspired him with new confidence in his own powers. He soon after produced a large picture of St. Paul preaching to the Britons; and so well was it thought of that the Society of Arts presented him with a hundred guineas, and when exhibited in Spring Gardens it so far excelled the works opposed to it, that some were justified in exclaiming, "We have now got an historical painter of our own!" It was indeed a picture of considerable merit — displaying no little originality of character in some of the heads — and above all, it was the work of a very young man fresh from the country, who had never been abroad and had studied but little at home.

At this period he had acquired the friendship of Reynolds; which I must impute to the merit of the one and the discernment of the other, rather than seek a reason for it, as one of the biographers of Romney has done, in the circumstance that Mortimer was not a painter of

portraits. He, in fact, painted a number of portraits, and generally seized the character; but what he won by drawing he lost by colouring, for his brush was no flatterer; and from want of skill or want of inclination to dip it in the hues of heaven, and soothe the fair or the vain, he had no chance of profitable success in that department. "In truth," says Edwards, in his Anecdotes, "he seemed not over fond of that branch of painting, so that some of his productions of this kind were not so pleasing as those of some of his contemporary artists, who yet were much inferior to him in talent." To paint lips,

> "Like the red rose-bud, moist with morning dew,
> Breathing delight,"

was not an art in which Mortimer excelled. He drew heads the size of life in black and white crayons in a masterly manner, and he chiefly loved to draw those of his friends. He probably disdained, or affected to disdain, fine colouring as unworthy of the boldness of genius: it cannot, however, be doubted, that fine colouring would have added infinitely to the value of all his compositions.

It was not in clay-like colouring alone that he was distinguished from his brethren,—he desired to be thought a gay and a graceless fellow: one who could alike defy the dangers of the streets of London at midnight, and the effects of wine, and all manner of revelry. He loved that the morning light should find him the centre and soul of the merry ring,—indulging in free license of speech, nor solicitous about the delicacy of his

wit or the purity of his humour. To enable him to brave the consuming tear and wear of such wild indulgence, it had pleased nature to bestow upon him uncommon strength and activity of body, and a constitution which no ordinary license could effectually crush and destroy. It must be owned, that Mortimer put these gifts of nature upon very severe duty. Besides the pleasures of the board and the bottle, he loved to exhibit himself in feats of activity and strength, and used to laugh at his less vigorous or more considerate brethren; and declared, that the artists of London seemed the candidates for an hospital, — the halt, the crooked, the rickety, the half-blind, and the deaf, all were there.

To aid in setting off his graceful person and his manly looks, he called in the help of costly and gaudy dress; costly and gaudy indeed, compared to the plain apparel of the children of prudence and utility of this generation, but yet unworthy of being shown with the damasked velvet and golden attire of dandies of the purest water in the first years of the reign of the good King George the Third. The courtier who could go to a levee with a whole manor on his back, had no chance of being outshone by an artist, who could only put on to the worth of a picture

large gilt buttons the size of a half-crown; a white satin waistcoat, embroidered with sprigs of jasmine; a pair of black satin small-clothes, with Bristol stone knee-buckles; a pair of Scott's liquid dye blue silk stockings, with Devonshire clocks; long-quartered shoes, with large square buckles, which covered the whole of his instep down to his toes; a shirt with a frill and ruffles of lace; his hair pomatumed and powdered, with an immense toupee, three curls on a side, and tied up with a tremendous club behind." Such was Mortimer; and no doubt an artist-beau of this stamp surpassed as far in extravagance the modest sons of the brush and easel of these our days, as this Salvator of Sussex excelled his less athletic brethren in feats of agility and trials of strength.

Of his eccentricities, while labouring under the delusion that he could not well be a genius without being unsober and wild, one specimen may suffice. He was employed by Lord Melbourne to paint a ceiling at his seat of Brocket Hall, Herts; and taking advantage of permission to angle in the fish-pond, he rose from a carousal at midnight, and seeking a net, and calling on an assistant painter for help, dragged the preserve, and left the whole fish gasping on the bank in rows. Nor was this the worst: when reproved mildly, and with smiles, by Lady Melbourne, he had the audacity to declare, that her beauty had so bewitched him he knew not what he was about. To plunder the fish-pond, and be impertinent to the lady, was not the way to obtain patronage: the impudent painter collected his pencils to-

gether and returned to London. He returned, nothing abashed by this sharp reproof to his inelegant pleasures and ignoble company. To be reckoned a first-rate cricket-player, — to be the last who yielded to the circulation of the bottle, — to rule in a loose frolic, and to conquer in a wrestling-match, were still among the prime points of his ambition.

He saw the folly of his ways at last, and resolved to amend and become wise. Perhaps he had abated the devil in his nature, by a long course of indulgence, and desired to make an offering to art of the wreck which folly had left. To help him in keeping this sensible resolution, he took to wife Jane Thirsel, the daughter of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood of Foxtone, with whom a courtship of ten years had made him well acquainted; and his choice was a fortunate one. She loved him much, and by her winning manner and excellent good sense persuaded him out of his extravagance, and restrained him from consorting with profane wits. Dr. Bates of Missenden, their friend and frequent guest, said Mortimer and his wife possessed, in an uncommon degree, the same turn of mind, brilliancy of fancy, and smartness of repartee, accompanied with the utmost cheerfulness of temper. The remedy of matrimony, no doubt, had come rather late; much of the original vigour of the man was gone, his activity was declining, and the good looks in which he so prided himself had become faded and dim. His powers of mind and readiness of fancy were not, however, lessened; and he applied himself to art with more than the

diligence, and all the enthusiasm, of his early days.

His places of residence have been thought worthy of notice by his biographers. He had lodgings for several years at one Maronne's, a bookseller, under the piazzas in Covent Garden: he next lived with Langford, an auctioneer, in the churchyard of St. Paul, Covent Garden; and then he removed to Norfolk Street, Strand.

The order in which the chief works of Mortimer were executed cannot now be ascertained; nor is there any complete catalogue of his productions. He made twelve heads from the chief characters in Shakspeare; of which the one that personated

"The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,"

showed a bard thinking with all his might, and putting on a look of inspiration and rapture; while those of Caliban and Edgar are full of original character and expression, and show how much he liked subjects strange and superhuman. He was so fond of the monsters which belong to a disturbed fancy or a wild dream, that he actually drew and etched a set of those capricious creations, and dedicated them to Sir Joshua Reynolds. The calm, contemplative President, a lover of the medium in all things, was not a little startled when he saw these wanderings and vagaries of one whom he esteemed: but advice to an artist so will-o-wispish as Mortimer he knew was useless; so he looked pleased — complimented him on his twofold skill with the pencil and graver, and laid them carefully aside among his

other curiosities. It must be confessed that, as far as style goes in the execution of things strange and monstrous, these works are masterly: they show, too, a kind of distempered fancy, a certain sort of inspired incoherence, which many mistake for the purest imagination. But true imagination never calls up shapes out of keeping with tradition or nature — there are no creatures with seven heads and ten horns in all her speculations. These visions of Mortimer seem but a more fanciful sort of heraldic inventions; and may be ranked with the Lamias of antiquity, the mermaids of the middle ages, and the krakens which American navigators continue to see upon the coast of Norway.

Soon after his marriage, Mortimer, to show that he was not only reclaimed from folly, but resolved to teach the world from his own experience an important lesson in life, drew and exhibited "The Progress of Vice;" a work which was well received, for its purpose was well understood; and the painter had rendered his details sufficiently plain for all degrees of comprehension. But it must be owned that there is a certain beauty even in vice which is dangerous to look upon; and he who gives loose images of loveliness with the hope that we shall loathe them as is our duty, calculates too surely upon the better side of human nature. He was so much pleased with his success, that he drew and exhibited "The Progress of Virtue:" but the pleasure of having limned a moral work was destined to be all his reward. It was sarcastically observed, that the town, respecting the first work, thought with the poet,—

" Vice is a monster of such hideous mien
That to be hated needs but to be seen,"—

and came in crowds to look and loathe, and walk home wiser and amended: but, with regard to the second, they were content to imagine an image of virtue for themselves; and did not believe that the painter was so fully reclaimed from " life's wild career " as to justify this attempt to become a master in morals. Whatever was the cause, " The Progress of Virtue" found few admirers.

The designs of Mortimer have been generally preferred to his paintings. He threw these out at one effort of fancy — every after-touch rendered them colder and tamer; and when he desired to expand them into full-sized pictures, he found that the mechanical labour gradually crept, like the night-mare, over his performance, taming down the happy ecstasy of early thought, and giving to his flowing touches the look of lines in architecture — more a matter of geometry than of fancy. The cold, dull colours which he spread over the whole, subdued in the eyes of many all that remained of original beauty in the performance. His talent and readiness in design made him in some request among booksellers and churchmen: he illustrated several of the poets; he designed the elevation of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, for the great window of Salisbury cathedral; and the Cartoons for the window of stained glass in Brasen Nose College, Oxford, were of his drawing. " It was astonishing," says Pilkington, " to observe with

what rapidity he wrought. No man seemed less conscious of his own powers than himself, or less unwilling to encourage others who had the smallest pretensions to excellence. Before he attempted any work of importance, he always devoted some time to the perusal of that author who could give him the most information; and, indeed, his conversation frequently teemed with allusions to the politest writers, expressed in the most forcible terms. After the sketch had been drawn he generally gave himself some rest."

Some time in the year 1775, his health began to decline; and he was advised by Dr. Bates to remove for a time to Aylesbury, in Berks; where he found a spacious house fit for the exhibition of his works, a garden stored with flowers and fruit-trees, and society of a soberer and worthier sort than he had formerly abandoned himself to in London. The fresh air,—the change of scene,—and the converse which he enjoyed with the Kenyons, the Drakes, the Scottowes, and the Despencers,—all contributed to the recovery of his health, and the restoration of his original ardent tone of mind. He wrought with much diligence; and in one year, the most fruitful of his brief life, painted works to the amount of nine hundred pounds. Those who had known Mortimer in his wilder days were astonished at the change which reflection had now wrought: his discourse was decent, and even delicate; his attendance at church punctual; and the more discerning remarked that he was deeply pained at the thought of his past levities, and was seek-

ing consolation where it could best be found — in the Holy Scriptures.

The air and the society of Aylesbury were, no doubt, beneficial to his health; but not equally so to his fame. He who lives by painting, must consent to live as publicly as he can; when no longer seen, his works and his merits run the risk of being forgotten. He who retires into solitude with the hope that patronage and employment will follow, and find him out, will soon see his delusion, unless his genius is so original and rare as to command, like a spell, the attention of his country.

He returned to London: but if he was no longer the gay and the graceless, neither was he the athletic and the active, Mortimer; and, — what in his present state of feeling he, perhaps, deplored more, — he was considered insincere by the envious and the malignant. His skill of hand, and his readiness of fancy, had not, however, deserted him; and he designed, and drew, and painted, as readily as ever. He had formed his style first on nature, and confirmed and corrected it by the study of the antique: and such was his wondrous facility of hand, and knowledge of the human form, that he could draw with a common pen and ink the human skeleton in any attitude, and afterwards, with a different-coloured ink, clothe it with muscles. He had, in an uncommon degree, that vivid power of imagining as if it lived and breathed before him, whatever subject he chose to touch; and despised models. "All subjects," says Pilkington, "whether of history, landscape, animals, or still life,—every object from

the human figure to a plant, a flower, an insect, a reptile, or shell, — he could represent from his imagination only, with a truth and perfection that rivalled the nature he imitated."

It must be acknowledged that his productions, — at least most of those which are now visible, — scarcely support such high praise; but, no doubt, it is much to the injury of Mortimer's fame that his works are chiefly sketches, and confined of course to the portfolio. Had he mastered colour, or turned his mind in time to it, he would have produced pictures worthy of any modern collection. His "King John signing Magna Charta," — "The Battle of Agincourt," — "The Origin of Health," — "The Tragic and Comic Muses," — "Sextus consulting Erictho, from Lucan," — "The Incantation," — "Vortigern and Rowena," — and his "Groups of Banditti," — are all marked with an air which belongs to no other painter. He has at least the merit of looking like himself alone — a merit not small in these latter days of sordid imitation in literature and art. It has been remarked, that he impressed nobleness and truth on the countenances of all his figures; and moreover, that with these noble and beautiful characters his imagination was so amply stored, that, in all his numerous paintings and drawings, there never appeared two that were not different. On looking at his heads, one can readily imagine that he first sought the foundation of the character in life, and then dwelt upon it, and embellished it from a fancy ready to elevate what was common, and render what was only brave heroic. It is related of him by Ireland, that when requested

to delineate the Passions, as personified by Gray, — more particularly

" Moody Madness laughing wild amidst severest woe,"—

he opened his portfolio, and pointing to the principal figure in the eighth plate of " The Rake's Progress," exclaimed, " If I had never seen this print, I should say it was not possible to paint these contending passions in the same countenance. Having seen this, which displays the poet's idea with the faithfulness of a mirror, I dare not attempt it. I could only make a correct copy; a deviation from this portrait in a single line would be a departure from the character."

Neither books nor tradition enable me to say much more of Mortimer. He came from Aylesbury to his house in Norfolk Street some time in September, 1778; he appeared to ail little; was cheerful; talked of his future prospects in art; his expectation of being admitted into the Royal Academy; spoke of his own many-coloured career; and, laughing, declared he would write it in Hudibrastic verse. He wrought little, and seemed on the point of wearing through the winter, when he was attacked by a fever, with such violence that his constitution, weakened by early excesses, sunk in the struggle, after a few days of great suffering. Mortimer died in the arms of his attached friend, Dr. Bates, on the 4th of February, 1779, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and was buried beside the altar in the church of High Wycombe, near his great picture of St. Paul preaching to the Britons.

From the amount of reputation acquired by

Mortimer in his day, posterity has made no gentle deductions. Fame is, indeed, hard to win; and the most gifted spirit cannot be sure of either achieving or retaining it for a moment. Like quicksilver in fickle weather, the fame of living men is continually rising and falling: nor is it a certain thing with the dead. Fashions, manners, faces, and events, on the depicting of which the hope of reputation was founded, wear out, are forgotten, or cease to interest: some colossal genius steps into the path perhaps, and throws the humbler wayfarer into the shade; or some stern critic, armed in the triple mail of art, learning, and authority, writes or lectures a reputation down — because perhaps he has heard it compared with his own. That genius may be considered as singularly fortunate who escapes both the sarcasms of the severe and the high-flown praise of the indiscriminating: but the fame of Mortimer has had to contend against this double pressure. Pilkington rates him too high; Fuseli too low: the former commiserated his fate, and admired the wildness of his conceptions; the latter liked none of the eminent masters of the English school, — spoke with contempt of Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Romney, — and was much disposed to consider every one a personal enemy who presumed to paint either poetry or history, which he presumptuously claimed as a province wherein he was sole monarch. He, whose taste was so sublime that he accounted Milton and Shakspeare the only poets of our island, and whose notions of excellence in art were so lofty that he could endure little save the finest works of Greece or

Italy, was not a man to sympathise with such productions as those of Mortimer.

Fuseli accuses him of weakness in conception; he might more properly have charged him with extravagance. There is a continual bustle — a desire to be doing more than is necessary — a feverish animation and convulsive strength in most of his groups — but little that can be called mean or commonplace. But then this perpetual effort in muscular action, and continual straining after vigorous mental expression, is so apparent, that we soon see it is unnatural: we feel that noble actions require to be done with more ease and grace. It is true that hot and heady fights, and feats of smugglers and banditti, cannot be achieved in tranquillity and repose: but it is also true, that the animation of nature should not be exceeded. It is the province of heroes to perform noble actions without ungraceful efforts, and of great minds to think with calmness and dignity. All Mortimer's fine drawing, and wonderful ease and freedom of touch, cannot conceal the hectic flush and convulsive vigour of his heroes. The weak are always struggling to look strong; and when the heavy-headed try to think, there must needs be wrinkles on the brow to show the pain it costs. With all his defects, however, Mortimer was an artist of true original powers, and as such is entitled to the approbation of posterity, much more than any of those whose chief merit is the absence of gross faults.

RAEBURN.

Sir Henry Raeburn was born at Stockbridge, then a separate suburb, but now a portion of Edinburgh, on the 4th day of March, 1756. His ancestors, according to the family account, lived on the border, and were husbandmen in peace and soldiers in war, till the days of disorder ended with the union of the crowns, upon which they laid aside the helmet and sword, and peacefully cultivated the ground during succeeding generations. One of their descendants, Robert Raeburn, removed to Stockbridge,—married Ann Elder,—commenced manufacturer,—became the proprietor of mills, and father of two sons, William and Henry; of whom the former continued the business at Stockbridge, and the latter became that eminent artist, the story of whose life and labours I am about to relate. This unpretending descent, however satisfactory to the painter, was less so, it seems, to a northern antiquarian, who, unwilling to believe perhaps that any thing high could be done by one lowly born, resolved to find him a loftier origin; and accordingly set up a genealogical tree, which averred, in the mystic language of allegorical biography,

that he was a direct descendant from the Raeburns of Raeburn, a family distinguished in the Scottish wars, who had won worthily the honours of knighthood, and were allied, moreover, in blood and by marriage to many of those martial names

> " Who found the beeves which made their broth
> In Scotland and in England both."

Whether this lineage be rooted in reality or romance I know not, nor is it very material in the history of one whose fame arises from his being the Reynolds of the north, and the worthy companion in art of some of the most eminent men of the British school of painting.

When only some six years old, Raeburn was unhappily deprived of both parents: his father, a most worthy man, died first; his mother, whose tenderness was sorely missed by one so young, survived her husband but a few months, and the two orphans were left to Providence and their own good fortune. William, the elder by a dozen years or more, supplied, as far as kindness and attention would go, his father's place; and friends were found, who so far compassionated the youngest that he was placed in " Heriot's Wark," the Christ's school of Edinburgh, where he was trained with all solicitude both in morality and learning. To classical proficiency, indeed, he at no time ever laid claim, yet his education had been such as enabled him to maintain without reproach an intercourse by letters with some of the first literary men of the age; and his manners had been so well cared for, that he was never found wanting

in that gentlemanly decorum and politeness which is not only becoming but necessary in a portrait painter. Those who remembered him at school said that he mastered his tasks like other boys, and seemed neither very bright nor very dull; in one thing, however, they remarked his superiority, during moments of idleness, such as are common in all classes. When the scholars drew figures on their slates or copy-books, those of Raeburn surpassed them all. The same thing was perceived in the school sketches of Wilkie; in the figures of arithmetic he was like other boys, but in the figures of men he had no rival. Raeburn has been often heard to say, that at school he formed intimacies with boys, which became the best friendships of his manhood. His nature was open and sincere; and though his temper was quick and warm, it had that quality in it which never estranged friends, nor permanently offended any one.

At the age of fifteen he was removed from school; but so little did his genius decide for him, that when a profession to be his support through life was to be chosen, he preferred that of a goldsmith, and was apprenticed accordingly. The silver chasing and engraving of Hogarth, and the wood carving and gilding of Chantrey, were something akin to their feelings, and even to their after pursuits: the trade selected by Raeburn was less so, though it is connected with much that is elegant in workmanship and design. In the goldsmith's shop, he remembered his sketches at school, and commencing first with caricatures of his companions, he persevered till a better and

worthier art rose out of his attempts. It has been asserted, that art in him was spontaneous, — that he received no lessons, — and had not even seen a picture when he became distinguished for his miniatures. This is an audacious assertion concerning a youth of sixteen, in such a city as Edinburgh, where paintings are in many places, and prints in every bookseller's window. That he received no instructions is very probable, — that he found out the way of portraiture in a great measure for himself, may be true likewise: but no one could live in a city full of works of art and be unconscious of their existence. The first thing, probably, that caught his master's attention was something like idleness on the part of his apprentice; — the second, the very beautiful miniatures which he had painted of all who chose to give their time to sit. His master was a mild and a worthy man; he praised those youthful attempts, and, to give him the advantage of examples, carried him to see the pictures of Martin. This artist, who resided in St. James's Square, and painted many portraits in the first starched Hudson style of Sir Joshua Reynolds, received the young aspirant courteously; and his condescension and his works delighted and astonished Raeburn so much, that he has been heard to declare, when his own name was deservedly high, and in spite of a disagreeable incident to be noticed presently, that the kind words of Martin were still in his ears, and his paintings before him. The portraits of that artist were to him what the verses of Ferguson were to Burns; and the result was not much dissimilar — they inspired a style more

free and more mentally lofty than their own: a sorry match will fire a fine train of powder. He touched his miniatures with a bolder hand, and they rose in estimation: his master indulged him to the very limit of his wishes: he generally painted two portraits in a week, and as these were commissions, money came pouring in; and so much had art now become the fixed purpose of his life, that he made an arrangement with his master to have all his time to himself, on the payment of a certain sum for the remainder of his apprenticeship.

In this state of comparative freedom his mind expanded: he began to take higher views of art, and to imagine himself destined to a brighter lot than that of making miniature likenesses of ordinary men. He formed something like a studio, or small gallery — began to try sketches in oil — and, having succeeded better than utter inexperience could have calculated on, he commenced working in the life size; nor did he find the task so serious as some of his brethren had said he would. His first difficulty was the preparation of his colours; putting them on the palette, and applying them according to the rules of art as taught in the academies. All this he had to seek out for himself: and there is no doubt that the thought which such knowledge cost him, and the labour and the time which it took to master so many obstacles, were well worth all the lectures thrice repeated of the skilful and the ingenious. To aid him in his undertaking he had recourse to Martin, who lent him several pictures with permission to copy them; but the elder artist felt

now some sort of presentiment that the youth, who seemed so disposed to worship his works, would, in no distant day, eclipse them; so he limited his help to the act of lending, and refused or eluded all explanation of the way in which a picture, from a mere outline in chalk, becomes a finished performance in oil. An eminent London painter, on being lately solicited by a student to show him how to commence a picture, said, "Sir, that is a mystery which you must master for yourself:" in like manner, Martin maintained the mystery of the profession, and Raeburn had to make experiments, and drudge to acquire what belongs to the mechanical labour, and not to the genius of his art. Even this limited sort of kindness was soon at an end: Martin, probably, imagined that he was arming a warrior for a contest in which he would himself be overthrown: he unjustly accused him of selling one of the copies which he had permitted him to make; the youthful painter indignantly asserted and established his innocence, and refused all farther accommodation from a patron so captious.

The name of Raeburn now began to be heard of in his native city; commissions for miniatures multiplied upon him: his portraits in oil, of the size of life, were not neglected, — he obtained sitters in that branch also: and so much did his powers expand with space, that the latter soon outrivalled the former, and grew so much in request, that he resolved to relinquish miniature painting entirely, and abide by the easel. Several friends concurred in advising this; and, amongst them, was the learned and witty John Clerk,

afterwards a judge of the court of session under the title of Lord Eldin; a gentleman of rare parts, who, to his other acquirements, added some skill of hand in the art of painting. The young artist and the young advocate were frequently together; and, as the one had to purchase costly colours, and the other expensive books, it is said they were sometimes so poor that they scarcely knew how to live till more money came in. On one of these occasions, Raeburn received an invitation to dine with Clerk; and, hastening to his lodgings, he found the landlady spreading a cloth on the table, and setting down two dishes, one containing three herrings and the other three potatoes. "And is this all?" said John. "All," said the landlady. "All! did I not tell ye, woman," he exclaimed, "that a gentleman was to dine with me, and that ye were to get six herrings and six potatoes?" The tables of both were better furnished before the lapse of many years; and they loved, it is said, when the wine was flowing, to recal those early days, when hope was high and the spirit unrebuked by intercourse with the world.

From the first, none of the stiffness and attitudinarianism of Martin appeared in the full size portraits of Raeburn; and, what was much more remarkable, none of the small, nice, trembling littlenesses of the miniature style could be traced in his oil pictures: all was broad, massy, and vigorous.

In his twenty-second year a change came upon him; and, as it was occasioned by his genius as well as by his courteous manners, and had much

influence over his fortunes, we must relate it. Art had been for several years the settled purpose of Raeburn's mind: and to become an accomplished painter, he studied art and nature; and, though he had no desire to forsake the line of portraiture, he loved to make himself acquainted with what was fair in landscape, and also with what was noble in historical composition. With the increase of his reputation, he found the doors of the rich and noble begin to open for his admission to their collections of pictures as well as to their tables; and as he was a diligent student, he missed no opportunity of improving his style, or increasing the natural force of his colouring. Sitters began to wax numerous. One day a young lady presented herself at his studio, and desired to sit for her portrait: he instantly remembered having seen her in some of his excursions, when, with his sketch-book in his hand, he was noting down fine snatches of scenery; and as the appearance of any thing living and lovely gives an additional charm to a landscape, the painter, like Gainsborough in similar circumstances, had admitted her readily into his drawing. This circumstance, it is said, had had its influence: on farther acquaintance, he found that, besides personal charms, she had sensibility and wit: his respect for her did not affect his skill of hand, but rather inspired it, and he succeeded in making a fine portrait. The lady, Ann Edgar, the daughter of Peter Edgar, Esquire, of Bridgelands, was much pleased with the skill, and likewise with the manners of the artist; and within a month or so after the ad-

venture of the studio she gave him her hand in marriage; bestowing at once a most affectionate wife and a handsome fortune. This was in the twenty-second year of his age.

Poverty, says the old minstrel, parts good company; it were well if it did no worse; but it forces genius to acts of uncongenial drudgery — crushes down the free spirit, and prevents him from following out the conceptions of his own mind with the vigour necessary for full success. Raeburn was now comparatively rich; his profession of itself was yielding him an income more than equal to his wants; his name was heard of beyond Edinburgh, and he was universally looked upon as one whom genius and fortune had united to raise. But he saw, that to obtain present popularity was one thing, and lasting fame another. The latter, he knew, was not to be gained by such imperfect skill as his, and he resolved to improve himself by studying the best models. He repaired to London; was introduced to Sir Joshua Reynolds; produced some of his portraits; and gained at once, it is said, the favour and friendship of the most discerning and cautious of men. Some one, from this circumstance, has called him the disciple of Sir Joshua; but he never had the honour nor the advantage of studying under him; and, indeed, if he had been admitted to paint in his studio, such was the care with which the President guarded the golden mysteries of his art, that Raeburn would have gained nothing save what his own eyes could glean. He himself ever afterwards mentioned the name of Sir Joshua with much respect — related

how he counselled him to study at Rome, and worship Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel; and how he took him aside as they were about to separate, and whispered — "Young man, I know nothing about your circumstances; young painters are seldom rich; but if money be necessary for your studies abroad, say so, and you shall not want it." This generous offer Raeburn declined with due thanks; but he gladly accepted letters of introduction to the most eminent artists and men of science in Rome, and, accompanied by his wife, took his departure for Italy.

I know not that he had laid down any settled plan of study; it would seem that his chief object was to endeavour to acquire a knowledge of those mysteries in colour and in workmanship, in which some imagine more than half the main charm of painting resides. Rome, at that time, had a higher reputation in painting than now; it swarmed, too, with adventurers, who purchased mutilated statues, and had their heads, and hands, and feet, and sometimes bodies, restored, as they averred, in the spirit of the original; men, who dealt largely, too, with that righteous class of artists, who make genuine paintings of the great masters, first studies, second studies, and third studies, and consign them to the conscientious middlemen, through whom so many galleries in England have been stocked. A man, too, of another spirit was there, viz. Gavin Hamilton, a Scottish painter of good family, and of some fame, and, what was more useful to students, of unwearied kindness, and of great influence. To him Raeburn was indebted for many attentions;

nor did he find the connoisseurs and regular dealers at all deserving of such distrust and scorn as Barry had regarded them as meriting. On the contrary, he found in Byers—the very individual with whom Barry had such stern and bitter altercation—an adviser of some value; and in after-life, when he spoke of his studies in Rome, he ever said, that to him he owed whatever advantages his visit had brought. The advice of this monitor was no doubt the best—never to copy any object from memory, but, from the principal figure to the minutest accessory, to have it placed before him. To the observance of this rule, Raeburn imputed, in a great measure, those visible improvements which men saw in his works, and that fine natural character which they embodied. With all the advantages which two years' study in Rome, and the sight of so many noble works of art, could give, he returned to Scotland, and in the year 1787 set up his easel in George Street.

The northern city, since the days of Jamesone, had produced no portrait painter worthy of being named with the Lelys, and the Knellers, and the Reynoldses of the capital of the South. Allan Ramsay, son of the poet, and born in Edinburgh in 1701, distinguished himself, as we have already related, in that department; but then he resided chiefly in London. Aikman, the friend of Allan Ramsay the poet, and, what was better still, of Thomson, resided indeed in the North; but his pencil inclined chiefly to history. Gavin Hamilton carried his academic graces of style and his cold and unimpassioned conceptions to the Roman market. John Bogle, a West of Scotland man,

excelled in small likenesses; he loved to paint the heads of ladies, which no one did more gracefully. His portrait of the "Lady Eglinton," to whom the "Gentle Shepherd" is addressed, may be compared with any miniature of modern times. He was a little lame man, very poor, very proud, and very singular. Like many of the limner race, he imagined himself of high descent, and claimed, in conversation at least, the earldom of Monteith. David Allan was a painter of rustic life. His old shepherds, his sheep dogs, and the interiors of his cottages, are worthy of all praise; but his shepherdesses were more likely to scare rooks than inspire love. He seldom touched portraits. John Browne excelled in pencil drawings; some of his small heads are of no common merit. Willison, after having been long in India, returned but to die in Edinburgh; he drew indifferently, and coloured worse. Many prints were, nevertheless, made from his works. Skirving, an eccentric man, who desired to be thought singular, and aspired to be a wit and an epigrammatist, though he had studied in Rome, seldom painted in oils, but drew profiles in crayons of great merit. In the rear of this muster-roll we may place Read, a wandering limner, who found his way on a time to Dumfries, where he painted the heads of Burns and his Jean on ivory. Such, with Martin, before mentioned, were the painters, living and dead, to whose list Raeburn now added his name — and all of whom he was destined to eclipse.

Martin was the first to prove the superiority of him whom he formerly insulted; his cold, blood-

less features, and formal attitudes, were eclipsed by the breathing heads and bold postures of Raeburn. Commissions passed his door, and found their way to his rival; in vain he prophesied that this fever of approbation could not last; and, like Hudson before him in the case of Sir Joshua, presumptuously declared that "*the lad in George Street*" painted better before he went to Rome. The nation, however, persisted in being of another opinion; Martin presently gave up the contest in despair, and retired from the field, where he had been long without a rival. In the eyes of men of taste and feeling, this was the triumph of genius over mediocrity; but the multitude perceived only that an expert manufacturer had succeeded better than one more slovenly or less skilful in pattern and fabric. There was no fighting against the obstinate national prejudice on this head; and it must be owned that the way in which a portrait painter parcels out his time over a given number of sitters, moving from face to face as if it were from chair to chair, conversing on all topics, and making his hand and eye do all the work, go far to support the vulgar belief that this particular branch of the art at least is merely mechanical. The low estimation in which ignorance held his profession never, however, ruffled for a moment the temper of Raeburn; he saw himself at the head of his calling in Scotland, and was happy.

He was now in his thirty-first year; had fine health, high spirits, a gallery worthy of being seen by people of rank and taste; and, what was not less pleasant, the bliss of domestic tranquil-

lity. Though his painting-rooms were in George Street, his dwelling-house was at St. Bernard's, near Stockbridge, overlooking the water of Leith, — a romantic place. The steep banks were then finely wooded; the garden grounds varied and beautiful; and all the seclusion of the country could be enjoyed, without the remoteness. The motions of the artist were as regular as those of a clock. He rose at seven during summer, took breakfast about eight with his wife and children, walked into George Street, and was ready for a sitter by nine; and of sitters he generally had, for many years, not fewer than three or four a day. To these he gave an hour and a half each. He seldom kept a sitter more than two hours; unless the person happened — and that was often the case — to be gifted with more than common talents. He then felt himself happy, and never failed to detain the party till the arrival of a new sitter intimated that he must be gone. For a head size he generally required four or five sittings: and he preferred painting the head and hands to any other part of the body; assigning as a reason, that they required least consideration. A fold of drapery, or the natural ease which the casting of a mantle over the shoulder demanded, occasioned him more perplexing study than a head full of thought and imagination. Such was the intuition with which he penetrated at once to the mind, that the first sitting rarely came to a close without his having seized strongly on the character and disposition of the individual. He never drew in his heads, or indeed any part of the body, with chalk, — a system pursued successfully by Lawrence;

but began with the brush at once. The forehead, chin, nose, and mouth, were his first touches. He always painted standing, and never used a stick for resting his hand on; for such was his accuracy of eye, and steadiness of nerve, that he could introduce the most delicate touches, or the utmost mechanical regularity of line, without aid, or other contrivance than fair off-hand dexterity. He remained in his painting-room till a little after five o'clock, when he walked home, and dined at six.

This regular system of labour could not fail to produce a great number and variety of works, and likewise bring a very respectable income. But methodical in most matters as he certainly was, and a man who embarked in nothing extravagant, he had an invincible repugnance to keeping either lists of his portraits, or any account of his earnings. The sitters, whether Highland or Lowland, lords or ladies, received their portraits when finished; the charge was made; and the money was, if needed, applied to the domestic expenses of his family, or placed in the bank, to work while he slept. This peculiarity — whether we call it culpable carelessness, or magnanimous disregard of lucre, has been very disadvantageous to the biographer. In a word it has deprived us of all chance to trace with accuracy the history, name, and date, of Raeburn's individual works. He perhaps enjoyed life too much to be very eager about either fame or money. He was happy and charmed, he often said, with the work of the day; and described portrait painting as the most delightful thing in the world; inasmuch

as every body came to him with their happiest moods and pleasantest faces, and went away always pleased to see that they looked so well on canvass. He congratulated himself that his profession led neither to discord nor disputes, — a circumstance much to the credit of his own tact and prudence; for strife and bitterness find out other brethren of the easel in situations where peace only ought to be. We can easily imagine that a walk on the banks of the river with his wife, or looking at the flowers of his gardens, or sketching landscapes to introduce into the back-grounds of his pictures, might be much more to his taste than the account book and the Ready Reckoner. Indeed, he acknowledged, that in his wanderings during the morning and the evening, he saw clouds, and skies, and landscapes, which he brooded upon, and fixed them in his imagination, where they remained till transferred to canvass.

Of his early portraits, that of John Clerk, Lord Eldin, may take rank with his best and latest works. The shrewd sarcastic look of the original is perfectly preserved. Principal Hill, of St. Andrews, another early portrait, is one of great beauty combined with depth and vigour. These he painted soon after his return from Italy. He was all his life fond of family groups; but as public taste is more with single portraits, he had seldom an opportunity of working in his favourite way. The picture of his friend Lord Eldin's relations, Sir John and Lady Clerk, of Pennycuick, is worthy of notice, both from being a work of his youth, and for the truth and

elegance of the likenesses. Poets and painters, from Ramsay to Raeburn, have found that mansion open — the Clerks have been the friends of the genius of Scotland for more than a century. These pieces and others carried the name of Raeburn over Scotland and England; and all who visited Edinburgh became desirous of seeing one whom the newspapers already styled the Reynolds of the North. From one who knew him in his youthful days, and sat to him when he rose in fame, I have this description of his way of going to work. "He spoke a few words to me in his usual brief and kindly way — evidently to put me into an agreeable mood; and then having placed me in a chair on a platform at the end of his painting-room, in the posture required, set up his easel beside me with the canvass ready to receive the colour. When he saw all was right, he took his palette and his brush, retreated back step by step, with his face towards me, till he was nigh the other end of his room; he stood and studied for a minute more, then came up to the canvass, and, without looking at me, wrought upon it with colour for some time. Having done this, he retreated in the same manner, studied my looks at that distance for about another minute, then came hastily up to the canvass and painted a few minutes more. I had sat to other artists; their way was quite different — they made an outline carefully in chalk, measured it with compasses, placed the canvass close to me, and looking me almost without ceasing in the face, proceeded to fill up the outline with colour. They succeeded best in the

minute detail — Raeburn best in the general result of the expression; they obtained by means of a multitude of little touches what he found by broader masses; they gave more of the man — he gave most of the mind. I may add, that I found him well informed, with no professional pedantry about him; indeed, no one could have imagined him a painter till he took up the brush and palette; he conversed with me upon mechanics and ship-building, and, if I can depend upon my own imperfect judgment, he had studied ship-architecture with great success. On one of the days of my sittings he had to dine with me at the house of a mutual friend; our hour was six, and you know how punctual to time we of the North are; he painted at my portrait till within a quarter of an hour of the time, threw down his palette and brushes, went into a little closet, and in five minutes sallied out to dinner in a trim worthy of the first company. I can remember no more that is noteworthy. I sat six times, and two hours together."

Scotland, during the forty years of Raeburn's labours with the pencil, abounded in eminent men. When he set up his easel on his return from Rome, Burns had just published his poems, and commenced his glorious and too brief career. Blair, Hailes, Kames, Mackenzie, Woodhouslee, Robertson, Hume, Home, Logan, Monboddo, Boswell, Blacklock, Adam Smith, Hutton, Ferguson, Dugald Stewart, and many others known to fame and distinguished for their wit — were all living in Edinburgh, and mostly in friendly intercourse with each other. Raeburn came

therefore in a good time: and he was more aware of this than the brethren of the brush are apt to be of similar advantages. To the great body of mankind the worth of a portrait consists in its faithful delineation mentally and bodily of some person whom fame or history cares about; and they will turn carelessly away from the painting of one of whom they never heard: in short, it is only the heads of distinguished men, or of women more than usually lovely, that they regard at all. Artists, on the other hand, imagine that the fame of the portrait arises from the fine skill and characteristic touch of pencil which it exhibits; and that the work of art, whether it represents genius or stupidity, wisdom or folly, will take its place by its merits as a work of art alone. This is true with regard to works of fancy, but false as respects portraits. Hundreds of heads exquisite in character and colour are manufactured annually, to sink, with all their fine art, into oblivion; while the portraits of the heirs of fame are treasured and prized, without much reference to the merits of outline and colour. Raeburn had the good sense to be of the popular, rather than the professional opinion, as to this matter: with the exception of Burns and one or two more, he painted all the eminent men of his time and nation; and a gallery of the illustrious heads of a most brilliant period might almost be completed from his works alone.

Of the portraits which he painted from 1787 to 1795, I can obtain no better account than the general one I have rendered; even the catalogues of the Academy give me no assistance: for it

was much the practice in those days to announce all likenesses as portraits of ladies or of gentlemen merely; Raeburn had, however, painted many; for he was already growing rich, and sitters were increasing so in numbers, that he was obliged to leave his rooms in George Street for a more spacious house in York Place. As art requires peculiar accommodation, he was obliged to build for himself: but this he was quite prepared to do; architecture had been for some time a favourite study; and with better success, because with better knowledge, than Romney, he planned and built, and in the year 1795 took possession of, his new gallery. This structure stands in one of the best frequented streets of the New Town, and consists of a sunk story for domestic accommodation, a ground-floor containing the painting-rooms, with a story above formed into one fine gallery fifty-five feet long, thirty-five feet wide, and forty feet high, lighted from the roof. On the walls of this stately apartment he hung his works when finished; and the doors were opened to all who had taste or curiosity. I remember, some twenty-three years ago, finding my way into this place. My astonishment was beyond the power of painting to express: I had never seen works of art, or at least of genius, before, and had no conception of the spirit and mind which colours could embody. I was much struck at the first glance with some Highland chiefs,

"All plaided and plumed in their tartan array,"

whose picturesque dress and martial bearing

contrasted finely with the graver costume and sterner brows of the Lowlanders. What I next dwelt on was several family groups of ladies and children, with snatches of landscapes behind, where streams descended through wild woods or loitered in little holms. But that on which my mind finally settled, was the visible capacity for thought which most of the heads had, together with their massive and somewhat gloomy splendour of colouring. The artist came in, and said a word or two in a low tone of voice: some one was probably sitting, for he had his palette on his thumb.

Before he entered upon his new studio, the race of great men whom I have named had nearly all passed away; and another generation, not inferior in intellect or in fame, but of a different taste, were rising in their room. The great revolution, whose leaven was heaving and working in the bosoms of all ranks, lent its electrical influence to literature, and vigour and audacity, strong light and shade, and natural emotion, became all in all in poetry. Criticism, of late so timid and respectful, assumed a fierce and a swaggering air; and a series of new publications, conducted with great talent, and with still greater boldness, laid the foundation of that power which, like fire, may prove a good servant but a bad master.

With this revolution in literature, Raeburn had little to do; his colours were of a kind which suited all complexions; and Whig and Tory were alike the visiters of his easel. It brought a new dynasty of intellectual heads to aid him in establishing his name; and he had the good for-

tune to be the comrade and friend of the chief of the old and the new schools, and to connect his art with both. Lawrence and his associates were all-powerful in the South, and the Exhibitions were filled with their heads: but Raeburn reigned undisputed king of art in the North; and though clever artists began to make their appearance, his pre-eminence was never for a moment disputed. Now and then a Scotsman sat to the London artists; but their nationality allowed few to seek further than Edinburgh; and Raeburn had all but a monopoly of Scotland, both mainland and isle, to the end of his days.

Of his portraits of the eminent men of the North, a short account is all I can give; brief as it is, it has been collected from many sources; the painter's own memorandums referring to mechanical problems, and not to works of art, and the Royal Academy catalogues recording no names. The first on the list is that full-length of Sir Walter Scott, in which the great poet is sitting on some fragments of Gothic masonry, with one foot a little raised above the other, two favourite greyhounds, "Douglas" and "Percy," at his side, and the "braes of Yarrow" for a back ground. The resemblance was great; and the picture excited so much attention at the London Exhibition, that an engraver was tempted to speculate upon a mezzotinto print from it. The success of this attempt was told me be the artist in these words, on the day the print was published:—"The thing is damned, sir—gone—sunk: nothing could be more unfortunate: when I put up my Scott for sale, another man put up his Molyneux.

You know the taste of our London beer-suckers: one black bruiser is worth one thousand bright poets; the African sells in thousands, and the Caledonian won't move; — a dead loss, sir — gone, damned; won't do." This fine portrait was painted, I believe, for Constable the bookseller; but it is now in the gallery of Dalkeith palace. Another, of nearly similar character and dimensions, was executed a few years after for the poet himself, and is at Abbotsford. A very picturesque terrier, "Camp," appears in place of the greyhounds, otherwise there is little difference. The Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff Welwood, Bart., a Presbyterian divine of great worth and authority, sat in the year 1810, about the same time with Scott: his portrait was in the Royal Academy Exhibition. The fame of Dugald Stewart made his portrait an object of great curiosity; and the painter seems to have been aware of what was looked for: it is a vigorous production. Professor Playfair had a peculiar face, impressed with much thought: I judge from his bust by Chantrey, for I never saw him: his portrait, which followed that of Stewart, found many admirers. The Lord President Hope was painted about the same time; and a more lofty specimen of the dignified judge was never, I think, produced. Francis Horner, who died too soon for his country, sat also; and the likeness was very successful: it aided Chantrey in modelling the head of his fine statue of that lamented statesman. The head of Francis Jeffrey, a stern critic, but a kind-hearted man, shows much of the intellectual sharpness of the original. That of the Rev. Archibald Alison is grave, gentle, and

full of thought. That of Henry Mackenzie, though full of years, has poetry and serenity of mind. The head of the Hon. Henry Erskine preserves all the fire and grace of the noble original. That of Henry Cockburn is perhaps a shade too solemn, but art should incline to gravity. The heads of the two Lords Meadowbank, father and son, are among Raeburn's best and most characteristic pieces. That of John Rennie is manly, vigorous; a fine specimen, as the man himself was, of bodily and mental power. These were almost all half lengths, and painted out of love for genius; they form at present a little gallery of the heads of eminent Scotsmen; and when the government has the fortitude to form a national collection, these ought, if possible, to be purchased and placed in the public sanctuary.

During the period in which he took the portraits of these literary men and eminent lawyers, he did not altogether neglect the children of art. He painted the head of Chantrey the sculptor, and gave it away in these words: — "Tell my friend, Mrs. Chantrey, that I will, in a few days, send up her picture: but do not think of sending an order in payment, as you proposed; for if you do I will infallibly send it back again by next post, and that would put both you and me to the expense of double postage." The painter was much less satisfied with this head than it deserved; — it was an excellent likeness; and the sentiment neither too solemn nor too smiling, but in that tranquil medium which is most becoming, and also most rare. He painted likewise the singularly handsome and intellectual head of Hugh Williams, the artist

and traveller, a man whose amiable character, elegant manners, and charming conversation are still mentioned with warm and affectionate regret by many friends; and whose exquisite drawings of Grecian scenery have been well engraved, and form the best of all illustrations for Childe Harold.* The third and last artist whom he painted was himself; and I know not that he ever succeeded better. We have now a fair number of the busts and portraits of poets, painters, sculptors, architects, historians, and men of science, who have made our age famous, and it would be well if they were gathered together and placed in some secure situation.

We have alluded to Raeburn's knowledge in architecture; he soon found an ample opportunity of trying his theories in practice. The creation of the new city of Edinburgh amid corn-fields and copses, where grouse and blackcocks have been sought for with dog and gun, within the memory of men still living, awakened a spirit for architectural adventure amongst the people.

* This artist's talents would have justified a separate notice of his life; but I can hear no particulars, except that he was a Welshman by birth, and of claims to high extraction in the principality—that he early settled in Edinburgh, and became a first-rate favourite there—travelled in his middle life through Greece and Italy—married a lady of good family and fortune, a Miss Miller of Garnock, soon after his return to Scotland from these classic wanderings, and did not long survive his marriage. He seems to have been too worthy, respectable, and fortunate a man to leave many materials for biography. There is an enthusiastic account of his Grecian gallery in "Peter's Letters."

Among others, Raeburn, having, in addition to his paternal inheritance at St. Bernard's, become proprietor of some fields on its north side, resolved to better his fortune by building; and accordingly planned and raised that beautiful suburb at Stockbridge, to which the New Town of Edinburgh has since united itself, and which, I believe, is called after him Raeburnville. This new passion lasted for his whole life; and so generally was his love for plans and buildings known, that when Allan exhibited that fine picture of his, in which he has collected most of the men of genius in Edinburgh round the humble but hearty board of the Ettrick Shepherd, the allusion was perfectly well understood, when he made Raeburn, in the middle of one of Professor Wilson's wittiest sallies which was setting the circle in a roar, quietly trace the foundation plans of his new town with his wet forefinger upon the table.

His love of building led to other matters, which could not but disturb the serenity of his life: he had let out his ground to numerous speculators: some of whom, from a difference of taste or regardlessness for specifications, hazarded a departure from the letter of their bargains; and he was obliged to have recourse to law to bring them to reason. It has been alleged, that he not only displayed great acuteness in this, to him, new field of enquiry, but also inoculated himself with a sort of abstract love for the subtle science of the law, which never altogether subsided. Certainly, if his case required such applications, he was surrounded with remedies; but the Spanish prelate recovered of a dangerous illness from not

living in the neighbourhood of any doctor, and it might probably have been as well for the outward estate of the painter, if Stockbridge had been further from the haunts of eminent writers to the signet and eloquent advocates. Be that as it may, he loved architecture and he loved the law. I have often heard a skilful builder speak of Raeburn's intimate acquaintance with all the economy of a structure;— and he usually concluded with— "Ah! he was a wonderful man." Nor was a witty lawyer of my acquamtance, long disciplined in Scottish law, less rapturous about the delight which the painter took in his own learned profession. "Of all our clients, he was the most enthusiastic, and at the same the most acute and shrewd. He dearly loved a *ganging* plea, and smiled to see difficulties arise which promised a new case. He was, as Prior says of another matter, 'a great lover of that same:' but do not misunderstand me; he desired to oppress no one, and never waged war but for his own right, and to keep his plans free from blemish, perfect as he had laid them down."

He had now seen out fifty-eight years; his pictures had borne his name far and wide; his family, of whom he had both sons and daughters, had grown up around him; and he lived on terms of intimacy or friendship with many of the first men of the age. No academy, either in England or in foreign parts, however, had yet admitted him as a member; and I have some suspicion that he was uneasy at the circumstance. The Royal Academy of London then only had one Scotsman on their list; and it had been often

said that they opened their doors reluctantly to the artists of the North. He thus writes, in 1814, to one of his brethren, since become a distinguished member: — "I observe what you say respecting the election of an R.A.; but what am I to do here? They know I am on their list: if they choose to elect me without solicitation, it will be the more honourable to me, and I will think the more of it; but if it can only be obtained by means of solicitation and canvassing, I must give up all hopes of it, for I would think it unfair to employ those means. I am besides out of the way, and have no opportunity. I rejoice in the worthy President's increasing reputation: it is pleasing and consolatory to see that additional powers come with the increase of years. Write and tell me what artists are about, and whether any thing be indispensable for a person who desires to become a member of the Royal Academy. Were you sufficiently in health to see Somerset House during last Exhibition? I had some things there; but no artist of my acquaintance has been kind enough to write me one syllable on the subject, to say either what he thought of them himself, or what others thought." The pictures to which he alludes were four in number: one was "a lady" — he seldom excelled in the soft graces of style and sentiment suitable to ladies; another was "a gentleman" — no one ever heeds a portrait that has no name: the others were works of a high order, portraits of Lord Seaforth and Sir David Baird. What effect these two noble portraits had, I know not; but before 1814 closed, Raeburn was at length an associate, and,

in the succeeding year, a Royal Academician. He was in London only thrice in his whole life, and it was on this occasion that he paid it his last visit: he was welcomed warmly by all his brethren; and by none more than by Wilkie, who had used all his influence in his election. It is one of the laws of the Academy, that a new member shall present to their gallery a work of art from his own pencil; and Raeburn presented, but not till 1821, a picture of a Boy and Rabbit. No artist seems willing to give one of his best works: they perhaps consider it as a disagreeable tax, which may as well be paid with inferior coin.

Other honours, of the same nature, and from distant lands, now awaited him. He was made a member of the Imperial Academy of Florence. This has a pleasing sound; but Florence is other than she was when her Academy was founded. Her towers are occupied by strangers: her fame in art has fallen to the ground; and he who unites himself to her perishing fame obtains a title of little estimation in the world, and gives in return a portrait of himself by his own hand, — a shrewd rule, which has filled the gallery with heads of all the chief painters of the world. On the 1st of June, 1817, he was elected an honorary member of the Academy of the Fine Arts at New York: — a rising institution of a rising state. The secretary, Robertson, says, in his intimation to Raeburn of this trans-Atlantic honour, that "the institution is in a flourishing condition, and the collection of paintings is rapidly increasing. In addition to such pictures as the funds of the

Society permit it to purchase, the friendly donations of many of the honorary members will enable it to boast of specimens of most of the distinguished artists of our day." In November, 1821, he was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Arts in South Carolina. The communication of Cogdell, the secretary, is in a strain more to our liking than that of his brother secretary of New York: no hint of the donations of works by new members. We wish success to a modest institution, which has the sense to say to such a man as Raeburn — "Your character and talents have been our admiration for many years: we have named you an honorary member of our institution; and should you accept it, you will confer a favour on us." Our painter was also admitted a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; an honour which, I presume, he could not have aspired to had he not been entitled to distinction for general accomplishments and extra-professional acquirements.

Meanwhile Raeburn was busy at his easel, busy with the line and plummet, and busy with experiments in the construction of ships. Of the former we shall speak first. The academic honours which he obtained, though they neither increased his skill of hand, nor inspired him with a new ardour, appear to have extended his already ample practice; and from that time forward he was a regular contributor to the Royal Academy Exhibition, of portraits from the chief families of the North. He became a favourite with all who wore tartan; and it must be owned that the air of loftiness and rapt-up thought which

he bestowed on his heads, suited well with the characters of those mountain chiefs. Macdonnells, Mackenzies, Campbells, Bruces, Hays, Scotts, Duffs, Gordons, Douglasses, Hamiltons, and many more, whose names are concealed under the common veil of ladies and gentlemen, appeared in the Royal Academy Exhibition, and attracted much notice. Their massive and vigorous style of colouring, and the poetical way of giving much light amid much darkness, distinguished them from all other portraits in the Exhibition. The notice which they obtained, and the feeling that the metropolis was the proper field for a man of genius, induced Raeburn, thus late in life, to think of establishing himself in London. On this delicate point he consulted Sir Thomas Lawrence. I know not by what train of reasoning Lawrence succeeded in persuading his fellow-labourer in portraiture to content himself with his Scottish practice. He did, however, succeed: and though Raeburn never expressly said it, he sometimes, I am told, seemed to insinuate, in conversations at his own fireside, that the President of the Royal Academy had been no loser by his absence from the field of competition.

Those who only look at Raeburn as a portrait-painter do him much injustice. He was an adventurer in experiments both by water and land. He had considerable skill in gardening. He was a learned and enthusiastic florist, and to the mysteries of hot-houses, flues, &c., he dedicated many experiments. To his love for maritime architecture we have more than once alluded. He made many models with his own hands, — neat, clean-

built, ingenious things, all about three fect long in the keel; and it was his pleasure to try their merits frequently in Wariston Pond. On one occasion, not long before his death, he had pushed his model from the side, where the water was deep; and on stretching out his hands to adjust a rope, he fell forward into the pond, and Cameron his servant rescued him with difficulty. I must not omit that he was one of those sanguine experimentalists who imagine there is an undiscovered power called the Perpetual Motion; and to a search for this he devoted in vain many an evening hour. To conclude, Raeburn was a scientific and skilful angler, and went often a trouting in his native streams: he loved to refresh his eyes, too, with the sight of nature, and inclined to wander by himself on the banks of brooks, and by the wooded hill. He loved to make long excursions among the distant glens and romantic woods of his native land, and sometimes did not return for weeks: his son Henry, on such occasions, accompanied him. Sketches of landscapes for his back-grounds were the offspring of those summer rambles.

Meantime the older he grew, his knowledge of art and his skill in handling seemed to increase. Critics and connoisseurs united in averring that he had now carried his own peculiar style as high as possible; and though one objected to his azure back-grounds, another to the want of detail in the lineaments of his faces, and a third to his daring distribution of light and shade, they all concurred in thinking him second to none in manliness and vigour of mind. Wilkie loved his fine depth of

colour; and Northcote, whom intimacy with Reynolds had made fastidious, declared that Raeburn's style of painting was the happiest of the present day. The pictures which called forth these eulogiums were perhaps, intrinsically, second to none at that time exhibited; but they were, moreover, in a new and peculiar style, and when will Novelty cease to have her charms? There were, however, heresies in Raeburn's style, which certain of our Royal Academicians desired to root out. One of them addressed him on the subject in a style at once bold and agreeable. "I congratulate you," he said, "on the great improvements which you have made in the back-grounds of your pictures. The spell that has been upon you for many years is broken, and Raeburn is himself again. Your pictures are now altogether beautiful. There is no beautiful head and finely executed figure ruined by a systematic back-ground; every thing is in harmony, and your subject has fair play. I wish you could see the difference between your other earlier works and these. I suppose there is no more Prussian blue to be had in Scotland, and all your Naples yellow is used up; or perhaps the climate of Edinburgh is altered for the better. I beg you to pardon this forwardness; I have ever felt a great interest in your reputation, and been much mortified when, year after year, you persisted in a manner that was so disadvantageous to your fame. Pursue your *present plan*, and your immortality is certain." In truth the changes which the writer perceived in the back-grounds had been made in obedience to the reiterated remonstrances of

friends in London, and were in accordance with a taste which Raeburn called, without hesitation, corrupt and unnatural. He condemned the alterations, and said he had changed nature for affectation.

When the autumn of 1822 brought King George IV. to Scotland, Raeburn was in the 67th year of his age, and hale and vigorous; dividing his time between his studio, his gardens, his scientific experiments, and the pleasures of domestic society. He was desirous of welcoming his Majesty to the North, and was about to be presented, when he received the following unexpected intimation from Mr. Secretary (now Sir Robert) Peel: —"I beg leave to acquaint you that it is his Majesty's intention to confer on you the honour of knighthood, as a mark of his approbation of your distinguished merit as a painter." He went next day, accordingly, to Hopetoun House — the company in the grand saloon were of the noblest of Scotland — the King made use of the sword of Sir Alexander Hope, and the artist rose up Sir Henry Raeburn. In the opinion of all who loved the arts, the honour of knighthood had never been more worthily bestowed: there was no small rejoicing among his brethren in Edinburgh; and on the 5th of October they treated him with a public dinner, and, through their chairman, the venerable Alexander Nasmyth, declared that they loved him as a man not less than they admired him as an artist. He answered modestly, that he was glad of their approbation, and had tried to merit it; for he had never indulged in a mean or selfish spirit towards

any brother artists, nor had at any time withheld the praise which was due to them when their works happened to be mentioned. In the following May the King appointed him his "limner and painter in Scotland, with all fees, profits, salaries, rights, privileges, and advantages thereto belonging."

The extent of those rights and privileges, and the value of those fees and profits, this eminent painter had never an opportunity of ascertaining; he was seized with a mortal sickness, and had laid down his head to die on the very day that the nomination was announced. "Although Sir Henry," says one of his biographers, "had reached the decline of life, yet his vigorous constitution, fortified by habitual temperance, gave a reasonable hope of his being for some time preserved to his friends and to the world. He appeared to enjoy the most perfect health, and was just returned from an excursion into Fifeshire with Sir Walter Scott, Sir Samuel Shepherd, Sir Adam Ferguson, and a small party of friends, united under the auspices of Lord Chief Commissioner Adam, to visit and examine objects of historical curiosity and interest. None of the party had seemed to enjoy the excursion more than Sir Henry. He appeared in his usual vigour both of body and mind; visited with enthusiasm the ancient ruins of St. Andrew's, of Pittenweem, and other remains of antiquity; and contributed largely to the enjoyment of the party. On his return home, Sir Walter Scott sat to him in order that he might finish two portraits, — one for the artist's own private gallery, and the other

for the poet's noble friend and clansman Lord Montague. These were the last pictures which the pencil of this eminent master ever touched; a subject of affectionate regret to the great genius represented, who had been long his friend. Within a day or two of his return, he was suddenly affected with a general decay and debility; all medical skill was in vain; and after a short week's illness, during which no distinct symptom appeared, he died on the 8th of July, 1823, in the 68th year of his age.

The character of Raeburn appears to have been every way unblemished; he was a candid modest man, ever ready to aid merit, and give a helping hand to genius in art. His varied knowledge, his agreeable manners, his numerous anecdotes, and his general conversation, at once easy and unaffected, with now and then a touch of humorous gaiety, made him a delightful companion; he told a Scotch story with almost unrivalled *naïveté* of effect; and did the honours of a handsome house and elegant table with all the grace of a high-bred gentleman. Through life he discharged, with blameless attention, all the duties of a good citizen. His pencil never kept him from his place in church on Sunday, and in the days of trouble he was a zealous volunteer. First and last, among all the children of art no one was ever more widely respected than Sir Henry Raeburn; and his tall, handsome figure, and fine open manly countenance, will not be forgotten for many a day in "the place which knew him."

His merits as a portrait painter are very great

He aimed at elevation and dignity of style; he desired to bring out the mental qualities of his sitters, and considered the nice detail of the features as unworthy of a work of art. The distant view which he took presented nature to him in its grandest expression; and he caught the ruling passion of the face, by taking the broad result, and not the detail. This was, no doubt, a dangerous experiment, and succeeded best with heads of natural dignity: by neglecting the lesser features, all subordinate expression was sunk; it was the application of the historical style to humble purposes, and Raeburn may be accused of conferring intellectual dignity upon heads unworthy of such honour. One of his greatest triumphs is in his last portrait of Sir Walter Scott: the face of this illustrious man is far from expressing his powers when you are at his elbow; but the distance at which Raeburn sought the character lent enchantment at once, and in the light and shade of his masses the author of Marmion and Old Mortality appeared. In expressing female loveliness he seldom excelled. "Surely," says a correspondent in whose judgment I put much trust, "no one could hit off an evil-favoured Scotch professor, or uncouth Lord of Session, with more celerity and effect; but in representing beauty he always appeared to me to fail fearfully; his style of colouring, and his indefinite outline, caught neither the roses and lilies, nor the contour of youth and loveliness. Besides, he hoisted people up when they sat to him on a high platform, which always shortens the features, and gives a pigeon-hole view of the nos-

trils. The notion is, that people should be painted as if they were hanging like pictures on the wall; a Newgate notion, but it was Sir Joshua's. Raeburn and I have had good-humoured disputes about this: I appealed to Titian, Vandyke, &c. for my authorities; they always painted people as if they were sitting opposite to them, not on a mountebank stage or dangling on the wall." A list, with dates, of the portraits of this northern master is much to be desired; the heads which he exhibited in London amount to little more than fifty: in the course of forty years' labour he must have painted many hundreds.

By his lady who survives him, Sir Henry Raeburn had two sons. The eldest, a fine youth with much of his father's genius, died at the age of nineteen. Henry, the second son, is married and has a family; he inherits of course the villa of Stockbridge, lives in the house where his father died, and has many of his works in his keeping, — not the least valuable, being various heads of men of genius in science, letters, and art, with whom the great painter had lived on terms of intimacy.

HOPPNER.

JOHN HOPPNER was born in London sometime in the summer of 1759. There is a mystery about his birth, which no one has ventured to explain: all that is known with certainty is, that his mother was one of the German attendants at the Royal Palace. The King caused the child to be carefully nursed, and well educated; when he grew up, as his voice was sweet and melodious, he was made one of the choristers in the Royal Chapel. All this benevolence was misunderstood. George III. was pious and generous, and such acts of kindness became him; but slanderers were not wanting to insinuate, that his Majesty had good natural reasons for all this tenderness; and it is said some such gossips actually possessed the boy himself with a notion of very lofty parentage. I believe there is no doubt that when he grew up, he was willing enough to have it understood, that he owed something more than his nursing and education to the throne. This was most probably the mere *ruse* of a shrewd man, who felt how much such a surmise would help his fortune; but it received some sort of countenance from the very active patronage of the Prince of Wales, (George IV.) who supported him against the

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orge IV.) who supported him against the

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JOHN HOPNER, R.A.

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE "VITTORIO EMANUELE III"
NAPOLI

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BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE • NAPOLI •

rising fame of Lawrence and Owen, and the settled reputation of Opie, and crowded his studio with princes, peers, and fine ladies.

Of the boyish studies of Hoppner we have heard little on which we can rely. He availed himself of the advantages held out by the Royal Academy; and entering a probationer with his chalk and paper, ascended slowly and systematically through all the steps required, till, with paint on his palette, and a brush in his hand, he contended for the highest prizes of the institution. With such success did he study, and so fortunate was he in his sketches and his early attempts, that, before his twenty-fourth year, he was looked upon as one likely to become great in landscape, and who already painted heads in a way worthy of a more established name. As soon as it was safe as a matter of taste to befriend him, he found patrons, and powerful ones. Mrs. Jordan sat to him, in the character of the Comic Muse, supported by that

> —— "goddess fair and free,
> In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,"

to whom the artist confided the task of repelling the advances of a satyr. We know not what might be meant by this; but the work was much liked. The fair dame sat again as "Hippolite." Another was a lady of quality shadowed forth under the no very flattering name of a Bacchante; but as the colours were glowing, and the face lovely, the audacity of the name might be forgiven. Then followed the portraits of the Duke of York, of his Duchess, of the Prince of Wales, and the Duke

of Clarence, now King William IV., with ladies of quality and noblemen not a few, and gentlemen without number. His time, however, was not as yet so wholly occupied with sitters as to hinder him from continuing to work in what artists technically call the "fancy way." A Sleeping Venus, a Belisarius, Youth and Age, and other productions, half natural and half ideal, belong to his early days.

All this, and much more, had befallen him before his thirtieth year; and as his colouring was rich, and his style of portraiture captivating to the vain side of human nature, his commissions increased in number, money poured in, and fame grew and spread. The light of the Prince of Wales's countenance was of itself sufficient to guide the courtly and the beautiful to his easel. Suffice it to say that, before he was forty years of age, he had been enabled to exhibit no less than fifteen ladies of quality, for so are they named in the catalogues; a score of ladies of lower degree,—and noblemen unnumbered. By this time another court star had arisen, destined to outshine that of Hoppner; though some, at that period, willing to flatter the older practitioner, called it a meteor that would but flash and disappear,—we allude to Lawrence. Urged upon the Academy by the King and Queen, and handed up to notice by royal favour, this new aspirant rose rapidly in the estimation of the public; and by the most delicate flattery, both with tongue and pencil, became a formidable rival to the painter whom it was the Prince's pleasure to befriend. The factions of Reynolds and Rom-

ney seemed revived in those of Hoppner and Lawrence. If Hoppner resided in Charles Street, at the gates of Carlton House, and wrote himself "portrait painter to the Prince of Wales," Lawrence likewise had his residence in the court end of the town, and proudly styled himself, and that when only twenty-three years old, "portrait painter in ordinary to his Majesty." In other respects, too, were honours equally balanced between them: they were both made Royal Academicians; but in this, youth had the start of age, — Lawrence obtained that distinction first. Nature, too, had been kind — some have said, prodigal — to both; they were men of fine address, and polished by early intercourse with the world, and, by their trade of portrait painting, could practise all the delicate courtesies of drawing-room and boudoir: but in that most fascinating of all flattery, the art of persuading with brushes and fine colours very ordinary mortals that beauty and fine expression were their portions, Lawrence was soon without a rival.

The preference of the King and Queen was for a time balanced by the affection of the Prince of Wales: the latter was supposed to have the best taste; and as he kept a court of his own, filled with young nobility and all the wits of that great faction known by the name of Whig, Hoppner had the youth and beauty of the land for a time; and it cannot be denied that he was a rival every way worthy of contending with any portrait painter of his day. The bare list of his exhibited portraits will show how and by whom he was supported: to twenty ladies of quality, who lent their looks-but

withheld their names, we may add the following: — 1. The Countess of Clare; 2. The Hon. Miss Chetwynd; 3. Lady Anne Lambton; 4. Countess of Oxford; 5. Hon. Mrs. Edward Bouverie; 6. Mrs. Whitbread; 7. Miss Grimstone; 8. Lady Grenville; 9. Lady Mildmay; 10. Lady E. Bligh; 11. Miss Cholmondley; 12. Lady Mulgrave; 13. Hon. Miss Mercer; 14. Mrs. Jerningham; 15. Mrs. Manning; 16. Miss St. Clair; 17. Countess of Essex; 18. Lady Melbourne; 19. The Countess of Sutherland. It is well said by Williams, in his Life of Lawrence, that "the more sober and homely ideas of the King were not likely to be a passport for any portrait painter to the vanity of ladies; and hence Mr. Hoppner, for a long time, almost monopolised the female beauty and young fashion of the country." He had his share, too, of the men. In the period of time (six years) over which the list we have given of beauty extended, he had the following male sitters: — 1. The Bishop of Durham; 2. Bishop of Carlisle; 3. Duke of Grafton; 4. Lord Camden; 5. Sir Arthur Wellesley; 6. Sir William Scott; 7. Right Hon. H. B. Frere; 8. Lord King; 9. Right Hon. T. Grenville; 10. Lord Hawkesbury; 11. Right Hon. C. Long; 12. Sir Samuel Hood; 13. Earl of Essex; 14. Sir George Beaumont; 15. Earl Spenser; 16. Earl St. Vincent; 17. Earl of Chatham; 18. Duke of Rutland; 19. Archbishop of York; 20. The Prince of Wales. The Duke of York's portrait was painted twice; the Duke of Clarence thrice; and the Prince of Wales thrice.

This rivalry of the court painters continued for

a time in the spirit of moderation; that spiteful courtesy which the world teaches,

"Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,"

was visible between them. Lawrence, the gentler and the smoother of the two, kept silence longest; the warm nature of Hoppner broke out at last. "The ladies of Lawrence," said he, "show a gaudy dissoluteness of taste, and sometimes trespass on moral as well as professional chastity." For his own he claimed, by implication, purity of look as well as purity of style. This sarcastic remark found wings in a moment, and flew through all coteries and through both courts; it did most harm to him who uttered it: all men laughed, and then began to wonder how Lawrence, limner to perhaps the purest court in Europe, came to bestow lascivious looks on the meek and sedate ladies of quality about St. James's and Windsor, while Hoppner, limner to the court of a gallant young prince, who loved mirth and wine, the sound of the lute and the music of ladies' feet in the dance, should, to some of its gayest and giddiest ornaments, give the simplicity of manner and purity of style which pertained to the quaker-like sobriety of the other. Nor is it the least curious part of this story, that the ladies, from the moment of the sarcasm of Hoppner, instead of crowding to the easel of him who dealt in the loveliness of virtue, showed a growing preference for the rival who "trespassed on moral as well as on professional chastity." After this, Lawrence had enow of gentle sitters. It must not be supposed that he heard Hoppner's injurious

words with patience: he vindicated the professional as well as moral purity of his style, in firm and temperate language; but he was on the winning side, and could the better take moderation for his motto.

The King, all this time, was of the Lawrence faction; for which various reasons have been assigned. Hoppner was an enthusiastic admirer of Reynolds, and when young had filled the palace with praises of his kindness as a man, and his genius as an artist. His Majesty never liked Sir Joshua. This offence was trebled, when Hoppner, resenting, perhaps, the coldness with which his earliest works were received at St. James's, openly joined the party of the Prince of Wales, and added his wit, which was ever ready, and his influence, which was on the rise, to the ranks of Whiggism. This was, perhaps, less than prudent in a man of genius, who, born for his country, should not give himself up to either of those parties whose fierce hostility has so long torn the island; but it was doubly imprudent in one who had become a husband and a father, and who had to win bread and fame from the patronage of the population at large. When the crop of handsome Whigs was reaped, he could not put his sickle into the ripe harvest of the Tories. Lawrence, meantime, with a prudence which Hoppner called hypocrisy, was silent in the matter of politics, belonged to neither faction, and so kept his easel ready and his colours in order for all.

Those who merely consider Hoppner as a limner of men and women's heads, who dashed

them off at a few sittings, pocketed the price, replenished his palette, and prepared himself for any new comer, do his memory injustice. He was a fine free-spirited manly fellow, overflowing with wit and humour, inconsiderate in speech, open-hearted, and as well acquainted with the poetry and history of his native country as the most gifted of her sons. The fame of his conversational powers survives among his companions. He was considered one of the best-informed painters of his time; and in the company of the learned, not less than among the gay and the noble of that day, he was easy and unembarrassed. Amongst his brethren of the easel he was still more at home, and made himself welcome by his ready wit and various knowledge. It was sometimes his pleasure, in the midst of a serious discussion, to start aside into the whimsical or the humorous; and, in the midst of boisterous mirth, he would as suddenly return to seriousness. Few could be quite sure when they had his sympathy; except, indeed, in the hour when it was really wanted — for then it failed not. He loved to surprise his friends; and if he raised a laugh, seemed to care little whether it was for him or against him. He and Edridge and two other artists once went into the country; quartered themselves at an inn where the ale was good; and as a fair was held in the neighbourhood, they walked out about sunset, when merriment begins, and mingled in the crowd. There was much din and drollery. Hoppner addressed his companions: — "Listen: you have always seen me in good company, and playing the courtier, and in fine took me for a

damned well-bred fellow, and genteel withal. A mistake, I assure you. I love low company, and am a bit of a ready-made blackguard,—see!" He gave his coat a queer pull; his neckcloth a twitch; knocked his hat awry; and putting on a face of indescribable devilry, started into the midst of a mob of reeling rustics, and in a moment was "hail fellow, well met" with the wildest of them. But rough gambols and homespun wit seemed not enough for his new character; he edged himself into a quarrel with a brawny waggoner, and had a capital set-to with the fists, in which the latter, though a powerful boor and withal a practised boxer, was roughly handled. He gave his antagonist half-a-guinea, set his hat and neckcloth right, and retired amid the applause of the crowd.

Though Hoppner confined himself chiefly to portraiture, he was not only skilful in landscape, but a most ardent lover of the higher branches of the art. He was not one of those who imagined, when he painted a portrait, he had done something historical, and who recognised in his likenesses of the ladies of the hour the great leading principle of moral and intellectual loveliness. He was an admirer, too, of the labours of such of his brethren as went to poetry and history for their subjects; and the following letter to Cumberland, concerning Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrimage, will show how justly he could feel, and how well he could express himself. It is dated 30th of May, 1807. "This intelligent group is rendered still more interesting by the charm of colouring, which, though simple, is

strong, and most harmoniously distributed throughout the picture. The landscape has a deep-toned brightness which accords most admirably with the figures; and the painter has ingeniously contrived to give a value to a common scene, and very ordinary forms, that would hardly be found by unlearned eyes in the natural objects. He has expressed, too, with great vivacity and truth, the freshness of morning, at that season when Nature herself is most fresh and blooming,— the spring; and it requires no great stretch of fancy to imagine we perceive the influence of it on the cheeks of the fair Wife of Bath, and her rosy companions, the Monk and Friar. In respect of the execution of this very pleasing design, it is not too much praise to say, that it is wholly free from that vice which painters term *manner;* and it has this peculiarity beside, which I do not remember to have seen in any picture ancient or modern, namely, that it bears no mark of the period in which it was painted, but might very well pass for the work of some able artist of the time of Chaucer. The effect is not, I believe, the result of any association of ideas connected with the costume, but appears in primitive simplicity, and the total absence of all affectation either of colouring or pencilling."

Hoppner was one of many artists who imagine they behold in the high prices and ready sale of the works of the great Italian masters a settled prejudice on the part of the public against all works of living men or of modern times. He was in the habit of saying, when he looked upon a fine work of his own day, "Ay, it is a noble picture;

but it has one damning defect,—it is a *modern* one. Prove it, sir, to be but two hundred years old, and from the brush of a famous man, and here's two thousand guineas for it."

The time was, however, at hand when Hoppner was to be no more moved in spirit either by the success of Lawrence in portraiture, or by the general preference of the public for the historical pieces of long buried masters. A visible change had for some time appeared in his looks; his conversation had grown rambling and incoherent; few works came from his hand; and though his skill seemed not impaired, he wrought, at best, by fits and starts. A gentleman has told me that, towards the close of Hoppner's days, he carried a message to him from the Prince of Wales concerning a picture then on his easel. He found the painter violently agitated: he had his palette in his left hand, and was dipping his pencil in the colours, and running to and fro, giving a touch here and a touch there to the picture. He turned suddenly round, and said in a tone of great mildness, "Sir, a thought struck me as you came in; I was unwilling to lose it; the picture has the benefit of it; and that must excuse my seeming rudeness to you." An anecdote related by Northcote is characteristic. "I once went with Hoppner to the hustings to vote for Horne Tooke; and when they asked me what I was, I said, 'A painter.' At this Hoppner was very mad all the way home, and said, I should have called myself a portrait-painter. I replied, the world had no time to trouble their heads about such distinctions."

During the early part of the year 1810 it was generally known that the health of Hoppner was declining, and it was the feeling of his friends that he had not long to live. His wife was careful and affectionate; his sons were growing up, and their minds expanding; and he loved, as all fathers love, to talk of the hopes he had in them,— hopes amply fulfilled, though he did not live to see them.* It was thought that want of success in some latter works weighed on him a little; but when the constitution begins to give way, there is no need to press the body down with imaginary ailments. He felt that internal feebleness and sinking of mind against which all medicine is weak, and kindness of friends unavailing. Many enquirers came, and kind ones: one among the most anxious, it is pleasing to know, being Lawrence, who went repeatedly. Hoppner, it is said, saw in such visits more of joy at his approaching death, than of true sympathy for the sorrows of a brother. But this, I doubt not, was unjust to Lawrence, who, amidst too much of the silken show of courtesy, was naturally kind-hearted, and of a generous nature. He shall speak for himself: these are his words to a friend:— "You will be sorry to hear that my most powerful competitor — he whom, only to my friends, I have acknowledged as my rival, is, I fear, sinking into the grave; — I mean, of course, Hoppner. He has always been afflicted

* The reader needs hardly to be told that the amiable and accomplished consul at Venice, so honourably introduced in Moore's Life of Byron, is son to our painter.

with bilious and liver complaints, and to these must be greatly attributed the irritation of his mind; and now they have ended in a confirmed dropsy. But though I think he cannot recover, I do not wish that his last illness should appear to be reported by me. You will believe that I sincerely feel the loss of a brother artist, from whose works I have often gained instruction, and who has gone by my side in the race these eighteen years." Hoppner did not live long after the writing of this letter: he died in the beginning of April, 1810, in the fifty-first year of his age.

The worth of his works has been widely acknowledged: he was one of those painters who, with powers and skill for the higher line of art, are compelled, by omnipotent taste, to labour in the lower line, where employment is certain and recompense sure. Yet labourer in the humbler department of portraiture though he was, he strove to unite with mere likeness the higher qualities of art; and in that simplicity and austere composure of style which he claimed for himself, when he satirised the loose touches of Lawrence, he beheld a closer affinity to the spirit and sentiment of those noble works which he set up as his models. Yet Hoppner was no blind worshipper of the gods of others; his chief deity was Nature — Nature exalted and refined: he sought for elegant simplicity of form and poetic loftiness of sentiment, and often found both.

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE • NAPOLI •

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BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE "VITTORIO EMANUELE" DI NAPOLI

WILLIAM OWEN, R. A.

London. Published by John Murray Albemarle Street. 1833

CHAP. V.

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OWEN.

ART has not yet become with us a fashionable profession for the gentleman and scholar: certain neglect now, and an indifferent memoir hereafter, are no inducements for the polite and the rich to take to the brush or the chisel; and the consequence is, when time thins the ranks of the Academy, the vacancies are supplied by the chance children of genius, who have come from the plough, the manufactory, or the shop, to assert the truth of the great principle of nature, that talent, like sunshine, sheds its light on all conditions. Such is the story of most of our first-rate artists; that of William Owen can scarcely be called an exception. He was born at Ludlow, in Shropshire, in the year 1769; the month and the day of the month are alike forgotten. His father, educated for the church, married the daughter of a very respectable family in Gloucestershire; and being disappointed in patronage, commenced bookseller, but with success not at all equal either to his wishes or his merits. Young Owen was educated at the grammar school of Ludlow, where he made such good use of his pen and his books, as enabled him, when his fame rendered it necessary to corre-

spond with men of rank and education, to acquit himself worthily. He was a well-educated, well-informed man,—outspoken, and vigorous minded; yet he never aspired to be thought a scholar, and was content with the fame, of which no examination could deprive him — that of a fine artist.

Of Owen's early attempts in art, and boyish methods of instructing himself, we have but vague and unsatisfactory accounts. His brother, a man of sense and intelligence, who has served with honour in many parts of the globe, and who now holds the rank of major in the army, has no remembrance of the studies of William, who was a dozen years older than himself; his father, too, has been long since dead; and his only son, the Rev. William Owen, much as he reverences the memory of his father, can add nothing to what has long been publicly known. The general account is, that he was fond of sketching from very early years; that, during hours of intermission from school, he loved to wander among the fine scenery of his native place, and that his first considerable work was that drawing of Ludlow Castle, which in after-life he thought worthy of presenting to Lady Clive, to whom the place belonged. We are told, too, that his genius gained him the notice of that eminent scholar and antiquarian, Payne Knight; through whose advice, and some add assistance, he was, at the age of seventeen, sent to London, and placed for instruction under the care of Catton of the Royal Academy. This has occasioned a twofold blunder, viz. that Owen was patronised

and handed up to fame by Payne Knight, who discovered him in the humble condition of a coach painter. But though Catton, who taught him, was originally a painter of coaches, he had ceased to be so before Owen was placed under him; and with regard to the patronage of the antiquarian, it amounted only to this — he praised him, carried him to London, got him a teacher, and never more noticed him, nay, never spoke to him, even when he met him in public. Those who were acquainted with that singular character, know that he thought it sufficient condescension to speak to a mere man of genius once in his life: so he treated others, equally eminent in art as Owen. — An exquisite copy of the Perdita of Reynolds obtained the painter the friendship of the President, and the advantage of his instruction. Of these early days little more is known; I must, therefore, leave them with their veil of obscurity over them, and pass on to those of his manhood — which were bright enough.

He made his appearance before the public in 1792, when he sent the portrait of "A Gentleman," and "A View of Ludford Bridge, Shropshire," to the Somerset House Exhibition: in the latter his early haunts were remembered. These were probably well received; for in the succeeding exhibition he had no less than seven portraits: one was "A Lady of Quality," and two were "Clergymen," but to none of them was a name attached. The mystery of his private studies might be supposed to have extended to his public works, had we not known that such was the practice in those days: the modesty of the

parties, the humility of the painters, or the etiquette of the Academy, have made early catalogues of little value in writing the history of painting. I have heard that it had been the wish of the academicians themselves to leave their portraits without a name, in the hope that, as works of art alone, they would win their way to distinction. Those of men eminent for rank or genius, and of ladies distinguished for personal loveliness, might accomplish this; but few of the annual sum-total of portraits have any such claim: this was at last perceived; and the name was allowed to be printed, as a new method of calling attention and exciting interest.

At this period Owen had leisure enough to give us a few of those exquisite pictures, half portrait and half fancy, in which Bird, and indeed most of our chief painters, excelled. He sought a young boy or girl to his taste, imagined some pretty employment in the midst of a natural scene, and then introduced the figure as the principal, modifying the features till they approached the ideal, yet still retaining the natural peculiarity of character. These I am disposed to look upon as his best works: and "The Study of a Boy;" "Venus, a Sketch;" and "The Bacchante," of his pictures exhibited in 1796 and 1797, are of this class. At this time he lived at 5. Coventry Street, Haymarket.

Some time in the year 1797, he found out an employment still more pleasant than that of imagining scenes, and putting figures into them, endowed with sentiment, and almost with life. Among the sitters who came to his easel were

two ladies, sisters, of the name of Leaf. He painted and exhibited their portraits; and with such skill of hand and fascination of colour had he acquitted himself, that they were universally admired; and the eldest of the two, particularly, occasioned many enquiries. If some were pleased with the portrait the painter was still more so with the original; and towards the close of the year he made her his wife. The only issue of this marriage was a son, who was educated at Winchester and Oxford, and is now in the church. Troubles, of which poverty was the leader, followed too close upon his marriage. In a moment, when he forgot in a warm burst of friendship whether he were rich or poor, he made himself responsible for another to a crushing amount: his friend failed, and Owen found himself burdened with a debt, which pressed long and sorely on him, but which at length he fully and conscientiously discharged. Want came upon him like an armed man, and compelled him to toil without remission at his easel. In the year 1798 alone, he exhibited no less than ten portraits: one of these was "The Lord Chancellor;" another was "A Family Picture of Lady Hardwicke and Lord Royston;" a third was "Lady Strange;" but the finest of all was a "Cottage Child from Nature." There he was easy and unconstrained, and moved without consulting the tastes and whims of fastidious sitters, who presume to dictate posture and sentiment, with all the judgment of Queen Elizabeth, who demanded her portrait painted without shadow.

To gain distinction in portraiture is at no

time an easy task, since vanity takes offence at truth, and a sort of flattery has to be practised to reconcile the proud to their own looks; but to come into the market against Lawrence, and Beechey, and Hoppner, who, patronised by kings and princes, had all the rank and beauty of England contending for place at their easels, required no common skill and talent. There is, however, no question that Owen was a worthy rival: his drawing was the least of his merit; he seized individual character with great force, and though his colouring wanted lucid depth and harmony, he never failed to stamp off an image mental and bodily of his subject: perhaps he was too little of a flatterer. A painter cannot select the most intellectual sitter; the mean, the parsimonious, and the sensual, pay as willingly sometimes as the loftiest of soul; and the artist who should drive away such subjects from his studio might starve amidst the applause of his virtue. He has, too, his own professional feelings. Your skilful and eloquent advocate saves some scoundrel from the hulks, or the rope, from no love of the client, but to show how genius can triumph over justice and sense: a painter, in like manner, extends the saving immortality of his colours to some odd and out-of-the-world sort of sitter; and as he touches in the fleshy softness of his cheeks and chin, or his glimmering seven-per-cent. calculating eyes, he thinks only of the wonderful skill of hand which his brethren will impute to him, and what the world will say of his ability.

It is the misfortune of the artist when he has to borrow fame from the importance of his sub-

ject; and I am afraid I must impute a little of the praise which Owen received for his portrait of William Pitt to that cause. Be that as it may, there was but one opinion of its excellence: all the statesman's friends — and they were the first of the nation — were its admirers; the fortunate artist was invited to Walmer Castle; and much was the man respected whom the premier delighted to honour. From this moment his fame was considered safe, and employment poured in.

A painting room more extensive now became necessary; he found one in Leicester Square, a place of old renown in art; and thither he repaired, in the year 1798, with all his gods,—save those of the domestic hearth: these he found a refuge for in Arabella Row, Pimlico; where he had the advantage of a view into the royal gardens, till the late King reared a lofty mound, and excluded all eyes from a privacy which, to the loss of art, his Majesty did not live to enjoy. In his new studio Owen carried on the manufacture of portraits to a vast extent, during a period of twenty-seven years. Men of all ranks, and ladies of all conditions, flocked to his easel. He rose early— wrought late; drew, painted, touched, finished, framed, packed; and when these were out of the house, fresh heads appeared. The monotony was sometimes too much for him. He has been known to turn a portrait from the easel, postpone the coming of a dozen sitters, single out some little happy theme, and in the course of a week dash it on the canvass in all the truth and charm of nature embellished by art: this put him in good humour with himself and with his destiny;

and lucky was he who sat for his portrait the next. Of heads, it is almost incredible how many he made; he is known to have *exhibited* nearly two hundred in the course of his career, — not dashed off roughly and at random, but executed in a fine bold free spirit, worthy of the school of which he was now a distinguished member.

We must name a few of the heads on which he bestowed the honours of the pencil. 1. Sir Robert Laurie, Bart.; 2. John Soane, architect; 3. Lady Leicester; 4. Lady Beaumont; 5. Mr. Stuart Wortley, afterwards Lord Wharncliffe; 6. Countess Cowper; 7. Lord F. Spencer; 8. Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham; 9. Marquis of Stafford; 10. Cyril Jackson, dean of Christchurch; 11. Duchess of Leinster; 12. Archbishop of York; 13. Bishop of London; 14. Baron Thomson; 15. Lord Grenville; 16. John Wilson Croker; 17. Wellesley Pole; 18. Sir David Dundas; 19. Sir William Scott; 20. Chief Justice Vicary Gibbs; 21. Duke of Cumberland; 22. Earl of Ashburnham; 23. Sir John Nichol; 24. Dr. Stuart, primate of Ireland; 25. Nicholas Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer; 26. Duke of Montrose; 27. Earl of Cassillis; 28. Marquis of Grahame; 29. Earl Fitzwilliam; 30. Countess of Cassillis; 31. Earl of Bridgewater; 32. Earl Verulam; 33. Major-General Hamilton; 34. Bishop of Peterborough; 35. Chief Justice Abbott; 36. Bishop of St. David's; 37. Duchess of Buccleuch; 38. Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart.; 39. Viscount Exmouth; 40. Duke of Athol. These are all names known in the world; and some of the portraits

attracted much notice in the Exhibition, but none more than that of the Duchess of Buccleuch; the placid dignity of expression and fine tone of colour brought many of the students to study and imitate. Cyril Jackson, a man of great vigour of understanding, and ready and agreeable wit; Lord Grenville, austere and thoughtful; Vicary Gibbs, shrewd, penetrating, and sarcastic; the late Bishop of Durham, generous and open-hearted; the Marquis of Stafford, stately yet gentle, aristocratic yet affable; – all were stamped off with much freedom and vigour, and such command of light and shade as kept up the name of Owen with the highest. Many portraits, however, which we have not named were of equal, and some of them even of superior beauty to the best of his magnates. Some of his female heads particularly, from the less elevated ranks of life, were of exquisite outline and character; his hand, where he was at home, and felt nothing very grand to overawe him, excelled in that careless yet elegant ease of touch which study seldom can attain.

In the full flow of his practice, and yet at a time when he little expected the honour, Owen was made a member of the Academy. He had gone there when he was young "to learn his trade,"—I use the words of Barry,—and naturally looked for admission to its bosom when he had proved himself worthy. This did not, however, come till the 10th of February, 1806, when he was thirty-seven years old, and long after he had exhibited some of his best works. It is true that men cannot be admitted to this dignity till

death makes room in the ranks; but it is also true, that by some chance or other, men obtain admission who, if true genius be the price, have no right to be there. The number, in the present overflow of artists, is too limited: if 40 were necessary in Sir Joshua's day, at least 60 are necessary now; and certainly 20 might be found among the associates and students, some of whom have produced works worthy of the very first names of the Academy.

This new honour lent some farther attraction to the name of Owen: it is even said that the Prince of Wales expressed his approbation of his talents, and spoke of sitting for his portrait. If so, however, the sitting did not take place. At this time, Lawrence with George the Third, Hoppner with the Prince of Wales, and Beechey with others of the court, were all but omnipotent; a circumstance which Owen had good reason to lament, as all the gay, the fashionable, and most of the lovely, went to those whom the King, the Prince, and the court supported.

Of this princely partiality he sometimes complained in private, and said, "These fellows skim the cream, and leave me the milk;" and when a northern friend, in condoling with him, said, with the poet —

> "It's hardly in a body's power
> To keep at times from being sour,
> To see how things are shared;"

"Just so," he answered: "had this Burns of yours, sir, lived now, I would have painted his portrait for writing these very words. Really I am sour, very sour, at times. There Lawrence,

with his low sweet voice, speaks of virtue and moral loveliness to the King and Queen, and they order more portraits; — there Hoppner, whenever he seems at a loss for something to do, the Prince, or some of his wealthy companions, sit to him, and help him afterwards to sell the portrait; and then Beechey, sir, — he sits with the feathers of princesses fanning his brow; — and so they go on, and I get their leavings." Of Lawrence he had no great admiration; he thought him much too courtly to be candid, and did not hesitate to say what he felt. It happened that he went to an evening party some time after he had become eminent, and several friends made a slight press forward to welcome him. A lady happened to be lioness for the night — one who did a little with the pencil herself, and knew all the children of the easel. She did not like that a lion should intrude; and, leaning from the chair, where she sat as in a sort of throne, asked aloud, "Who is that?" — "It is Owen, madam." — "Owen, sir! and who is Owen?" — "Oh! the new artist, madam, the famous painter." — "Owen, and painter," she responded, in a voice softened and low, — "I never heard of him before!" — "A female Lawrence, by Jupiter!" muttered Owen, and marched to the other end of the room.

His chief resource in times of vexation was in works of what I would call domestic history. On these he wrought with an avidity and cheerfulness unknown to him in portrait painting. He borrowed the action, and the sentiment, and story from fancy, and filled up the outline from nature: but then he did not slavishly transfer

nature, rough and raw as he found it, to his canvass; he looked at it as a bee surveys the flower, — not to carry off the bloom, but collect the honey. Of these, "The Beggar's Daughter of Bethnal Green" was one of his earliest and happiest; it appeared in the Academy in 1801, and the catalogue referred the visiter to the old ballad of that name in Percy's Reliques. On comparing the painting with the poetry, it was evident that the artist had caught the character truly, and, amid all the humility of the maiden's condition, had shown some of that inborn nobleness of nature expressed by the rude minstrel. "The Sleeping Girl" was another of those happy, and perhaps hasty, things. "The Schoolmistress" recalled the poetic picture of Shenstone to mind. "The Beggars" were touched by a hand which could exhibit wretchedness without exciting disgust, — which knew how to tighten rather than loosen the bond of sympathy which unites us to our species. "The Girl at the Spring" was well worth two of his finest portraits. But the chief favourite, perhaps, of his fancy works, was "Peasants resting by the Road-side." It was painted for Lister Parker. "Adherence to the simple elegance of nature," says one of the critics on the exhibition which contained this fine picture, "unstudied ease, and gracefulness of attitude, with beauty of face and form, charm the heart of the spectator The maternal tenderness with which the mother presents the nectarean repast to her child — the sound repose of the infant girl — the tranquil and amiable expression of the eldest boy, excite gen-

tle and agreeable sympathy. The drapery has a graceful carelessness, suitable to the humble character which it covers. There is scarcely a painter in the Academy who can vie with this excellent artist in the force with which he relieves his objects, while he preserves the mellowness and harmony of his colouring and effect. Sir Joshua appears to revive in this pupil of nature. He, indeed, has more firmness and precision of outline and drawing than that famous painter, and equally captivates by his faithful delineations of the lovely objects of humble life." The language of this critic is a little out of keeping; but his sentiments, though too richly draped, are just and true. Reynolds was an indifferent draughtsman; that is, he could not delineate the human form in the true elegance of its proportions by a mere outline: but he made up for this deficiency by the marvellous mastery which he acquired over the human form, taking it in the mass; he had a fine judgment in quantity, and his full draperies concealed defective detail. In this, certainly, Owen excelled the President: but then his colouring was less lucid and harmonious; neither had he that magical power in light and shade, nor that skill of giving to unusual postures the ease and grace of nature, which are so visible in Sir Joshua.

Those friends — and they were numerous — who sat to Owen for their likenesses, may think that a biographer is doing the artist less than justice when he passes over many portraits as things of small account, and dwells on what they, perhaps, considered the mere sportings of his pencil, —

the little studies of children, groups of peasants, and single figures, in which fancy and reality claim equal shares. In truth, his fame lay, in his lifetime, with the former; but in death, it must be maintained by the latter. Men's living looks, with the memory of them, die away and are forgotten; but sentiment and natural action belong to all times,—and in these, artists who desire the praise of posterity must put trust.—A Cupid, painted for Sir Thomas Heathcote, was called an exquisitely finished thing; and it was so: but the god of love has lost a little of his power in painting as well as poetry: and he who complains of the darts and flames of Cupid has, by the universal consent of all Misses above seventeen, been voted affected and pedantic. In a better taste was "The Fortune-teller and Lady:" it was easy to see the insidious poison of the tawny sibyl's tongue stealing through the frame of her victim;—so lovely and so innocent were her looks, that they attracted a crowd in the Exhibition from morning till night. The "Cottage Door" was another of his little happy hits;—so were "The Children in the Wood," a piece of which it is praise sufficient to say that it breathes all over of the simple pathos of the old melting ballad. Towards the close of his career such things grew less frequent: portraiture, with its temptations of pleasing society, prompt payment, and ready-made looks, which cost imagination nothing, prevailed. "The Boy and Kitten," his admission present to the Royal Academy, though mentioned last, was an early performance, and may rank with some of his best. As his powers first manifested themselves

in landscape, it might have been natural to expect some fine works of that kind from his hand; but, if we except the snatches of scenery which he dashed in as backgrounds to his portraits, and one picture of "Hawarden Castle, Flintshire," we can find little in which he followed the first right impulse of nature. A critic, who says of the Hawarden Castle, "in united depth and splendour it would almost stand a comparison with Rembrandt's celebrated 'Windmill,'" — adds these words, "from this branch of the arts Mr. Owen always expressed himself as having derived the purest gratification." Owen must, then, have put a sad constraint on his nature, when he turned from what afforded the purest gratification, to become limner to the population at large, at so much per head. Perhaps the demons of indolence and avarice conspired against him. Your poetic landscape costs much time and outlay of thought, and the reward is doubtful; whereas a head comes living to the easel, bringing shape, character, colour, and expression with it, sits quietly and smilingly till its likeness is transferred to canvass, and the money is gained. These are temptations which few are found to resist.

When, in 1810, he was made portrait painter to the Prince of Wales, and more particularly when he became "Principal Portrait Painter to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent," men looked — and Owen amongst them — for golden commissions, and free intercourse with the palace. These honours, however, were barren; there are

no royal pictures in the list of those which he exhibited: he held the rank, but other hands touched the revenues. When the Prince offered to knight him, in 1813, the painter modestly declined a distinction which promised to be expensive, and nothing more. It has been said, indeed, that had the painter lived till the Prince became King, commissions would have been poured upon him; but it has been generally observed, that royal patronage, instead of being diffused like sunshine over all that are worthy, has something of personal attachment about it. West enjoyed the monopoly of the historical department, and Hoppner was the only brother whom Lawrence suffered near the throne of portraiture.

Royal favour might have administered repose to Owen's mind, since it seems that he set a great value upon it; but, after all, he could not well have been more honoured than he was in his day. Sir George Beaumont, — a man of taste and talent, a painter himself, and the friend alike of artists and poets, — was warm and active in his attachment; not less so was Sir John Leycester (afterwards Lord de Tabley); the Earl Fitzwilliam loved the man and befriended the artist; Dr. Howley, Bishop of London, a divine, generous and discerning, appointed his only son, William, one of the preachers in the Royal Chapel, Whitehall. He lived, too, on good terms with his brethren; — Callcott, the eminent landscape painter, was his most intimate friend: they visited Paris together, when, in 1814, the bayonets of the Allies

opened the doors of the Louvre; but we have no memorandum of the journey, or of our painter's opinions upon the merits of the great works which he then saw for the first and last time. He was a man who felt keenly, and dealt in rough, strong, natural expressions, and has, like many others, left the tradition of wit without samples.

So much had commissions multiplied, that in 1817 he found his income for one year amounted to 3000*l*. He kept no regular account of any thing; but merely noted down his winnings in a little pocket-book, ran his eye now and then over the pages, and if he perceived that he was gaining remained satisfied. It is not known how much he amassed;—had his good health continued, he was in a fair way to a fortune. In 1818 he left his little convenient house in Arabella Row, and removed to 33. Bruton Street. On this occasion something like a presentiment of coming evil darkened on his mind; he regretted leaving a house dear to him, from the memory of the difficulties he had surmounted under its roof, and where he had gathered wealth and obtained fame. His forebodings were fulfilled: he was not well established in his new residence, till he was attacked with a complaint which prostrated his strength at once, and struck the pencil out of his hand. It is true that he partially recovered, nay, that he painted, after this, though with pain, an excellent portrait of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland; that the waters of Cheltenham strengthened him a little; and that he had intervals of ease, when he hoped his days were yet to be long in the land, and that he

should resume his studies with new fervour. But that hour came never; he returned to London, and sank down on a couch helpless and dejected: there he lay for five long years, experiencing no alleviation and no change, unless being wheeled from one room to another on his sofa can be called a change. Baillie, Carlisle, Lynn, and Warren visited him in vain: he was wasting gradually away; but his death was hastened by one of those melancholy mistakes of which we sometimes read: a chemist, from whom Owen obtained his prescriptions, labelled the medicines so that the unfortunate patient swallowed opium instead of an aperient draught; he fell into a stupor, lingered a few hours, and expired 11th of February, 1825, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

Those who were admitted to Owen's fireside relate that he was kind, hospitable, and good-humoured; spoke his mind without much consideration or choice of fine words; and, on several occasions, had shown much manliness, and not a little courage. At school, when he was stabbed severely in the thigh by one of his companions, he had the fortitude to be silent, and the good feeling to conceal his mishap in order to screen the other from punishment; and once when his brother, Major Owen, had fallen into a river, he plunged in and saved his life at the risk of his own. In his genius he was rebuked somewhat by those painters who had started before him in the race. The man who lives by recording living faces must always calculate the chances of such a disadvantage: more active or more

courtly rivals may run away with princes, ministers of state, and lords and ladies of high degree; and if so, he must either find heroes and heroines among the more ordinary part of the population, or throw his palette into the Thames. He who monopolises the king and those whom the king delighteth to honour, robs Laban of his gods, and he must have them back or perish.

HARLOW.

GEORGE HENRY HARLOW was born in St. James's Street, London, 10th of June, 1787. The story of his birth was truly and touchingly told by one who witnessed his funeral. "I shall never forget what I saw some thirty years ago, when I called and enquired for a worthy friend, long my companion in Canton. I was introduced to a lady with five very young girls round her knees, and a boy-babe in her arms; she received me in silence, and not without tears; the mournings which she wore were for my friend, her husband, who had been dead six months; the infant in her arms, a month old or scarcely more, was the eminent painter whom we have this day borne to the grave."

His father was a merchant, who had lived many years in the East; his widow, young, wealthy, and handsome, gave all her thoughts to her husband's memory and the education of her children; and her only son, as might be expected, had a large share of her solicitude. He attended the classical seminary of Dr. Barrow, in Soho Square; then that of Roy, in Burlington Street; and was also some time at Westminster school. Of his proficiency as a scholar there

are contradictory accounts. He was not unwilling in after life to talk of his attainments in classic lore; but he might do so with some safety, for he only alluded to it amongst artists. The learning of the youth could not be otherwise than moderate who left school at sixteen, and whose mind even before that early date had been much occupied with other studies.

The love of painting came on Harlow early; and living as he did in the midst of exhibitions and galleries, his mind was already disciplined to a greater extent than he was aware of when he took the pencil in his hand. The painter bred in the solitude of the country has to train up his mind among the rough, wild beauties of unregulated nature; the painter bred in the city studies the well-considered scenes of the most consummate masters, and has the culled poetry of nature served up to him in every gallery. The first acquires skill slowly; the other avails himself of the fruits of fancy not his own, and soon becomes dexterous in the tricks of colour, and cunning in the arts of posture and grouping. The attempts of Harlow were so promising that his mother, having confirmed her own opinion by the examination of friends, resolved that he should devote himself to art; and, with more eagerness than taste, put him under the care of Henry de Cort, a landscape painter from Antwerp, of humble abilities and supreme conceit, who undertook to teach him the secrets of the profession. In such a school nothing but enthusiasm such as Harlow's could have prospered: he acquired knowledge sufficient to see that he

was wasting his time; and, undertaking now to judge for himself, sought instruction in the studio of Drummond the portrait painter. "Here," says one of his biographers, "he pursued his art with an ardour from which even amusements could not seduce him."

He had studied something more than a year with this new master, when he grew desirous of profiting by another instructor. One account represents him making a tour of the painters' studios with his mother, for the purpose of determining on the most worthy; while another says, that this was decided for him by the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, through whose interposition he was placed under the care of Lawrence. That he might have made that choice for himself, is, however, very likely; young as he was, he could not fail to see much in the works of the future president akin to his own feelings; besides, it was natural that he should desire to study with the most distinguished,—and Lawrence had already asserted his superiority. His admission to the painting rooms of his new master was coupled with conditions, which sound strangely in ears unacquainted with the practice of artists. He paid one hundred guineas yearly as a pupil; and for this Harlow "was to have free access to Sir Thomas's house at nine o'clock in the morning, with leave to copy his pictures till four o'clock in the afternoon, but to receive no instruction of any kind." If such were the terms on which he commenced, they were, if we can credit the accounts of some of the biographers, very soon altered. "Sir Thomas," says Smith,

"being highly pleased with his productions, employed him to prepare some of his pictures in the dead-colouring, and to advance copies, &c.; but these repeated kindnesses, I am sorry to acknowledge, were ill-requited." What requital, permission to copy another man's pictures, at the price of one hundred guineas a year, without one word of instruction, demanded, I am unable to determine; Smith himself complains that he was never paid for some such privileges in the studio of Nollekens. Meantime that the son of the merchant of Canton was engaged in the unprofitable trade of art, reached the ears of some of his father's city friends; and they offered him the bribe of a writership in India, to forsake painting. His answer was, "I care not for riches, — give me fame and glory." The worthy men of Leadenhall Street thought the youth mad, and said so.

In the studio of Lawrence he continued only eighteen months; yet it is generally allowed that he entered more largely into the peculiar style and character of his master's performances than any other of his pupils. His success must be attributed wholly to himself; for Lawrence, though he employed him in forwarding portraits, never condescended to instruct him farther than how to accomplish the drudgery on hand: in this he resembled Reynolds, who, in his studio and at his table, allowed his pupils and his guests to help themselves, or want. Harlow was too proud to relish long the mechanical labours to which he was thus subjected, and became impatient of the restraints which regular studies imposed; nor

did he like the cold measured graciousness of Lawrence: in short, as he acquired mastery over his art, his vanity whispered that he had been long enough under the control of one who, he imagined, did not very far excel himself in the genius of the profession. He was ready for rebellion; nor was an opportunity long in being found. In the portrait of Mrs. Angerstein, Lawrence had introduced a Newfoundland dog, painted with such skill as brought praises in showers; and Harlow, who had at least drawn the animal in dead-colour, fancied that some of the drops of approbation might have fallen on him. Had his share been greater than this, as it perhaps was, still he could never have been justified in claiming it as his own work, or in intruding on the Angersteins, and repeating his accusation. "All that Sir Thomas Lawrence did, in a case," says one of his biographers, "which would have justified strong resentment, was to say to him, 'As the animal you claim is among the best things I ever painted, of course you have no need of farther instructions from me. You must leave my house immediately.'" Harlow did this without hesitation, and he repaired to the Queen's Head at Epsom; where his style of living having incurred a bill which he could not discharge, he proposed, like Morland under similar circumstances, to paint a sign-board in liquidation of his score. This was accepted — he painted both sides: the one presented a front view of her Majesty, in a sort of clever dashing caricatura of Sir Thomas's style; the other represented the back view of the Queen's person, as if looking

into the sign-board; and underneath was painted, "T. L., Greek Street, Soho." When Sir Thomas met him, he addressed him with, "I have seen your additional act of perfidy at Epsom; and if you were not a scoundrel, I would kick you from one end of the street to the other." — "There is some privilege in being a scoundrel, for the street is very long," replied Harlow, unabashed, but moving out of reach of the threatened vengeance. Such is the current story; but there must be some error either in the facts or their date. Harlow was but a youth eighteen years old when he left Lawrence, and too young therefore for a man's resentment; neither had his conduct, a mere tricky slip, been such as to call forth fierce language in a person habitually so cautious and guarded as Lawrence. On the other hand, had Harlow arrived at manhood when it happened, he would not have allowed the words "scoundrel" and "perfidy" to pass with impunity. However all this may have been; the pupil quarrelled with Lawrence, and resolving to be master of his own movements in future, commenced working for himself.

His love of independence in study was carried to an injurious extent. Having set down all lessons given to genius by others as impertinent, and all study in academies and schools as so much time bestowed in an attempt to destroy originality, he resolved never to avail himself of the facilities which the Royal Academy affords, and never drew there, nor enrolled himself as a student. He disliked all rules — all fixed periods of study — all limitations of subject or of

space; and declared he could do more at his mother's fireside, where his attention was undivided, — where he had no one to lecture him upon the propriety of adopting the styles of other men, and where invention was not laid down to scale, nor measured by feet and inches. Many other peculiarities have been ascribed to him — among the rest that of dressing in a style at once too expensive for his purse, and too magnificent for his station. Smith says, "He was often the laughing-stock of his brother artists, particularly when he wished to pass for a man of high rank, whose costume he mimicked; and that folly he would often venture upon, without an income sufficient to pay one of his many tailors' bills." We must, however, be permitted to accept this story with some distrust. To try to pass for a man of high rank by means of costume, at a period when all who aspired to the rank of gentlemen were dressed alike, would, I think, have been a flight in folly too high for Harlow. There is, I fear, more truth in the statement which charges him with inflaming himself with wine in company, till he forgot the delicacy which an age, pure at least in speech, requires. During these hours, which were not, however, frequent, he certainly gave a loose to licentious conversation; and men who, out of esteem for his talents, had asked him to their tables, were observed to be cautious how they repeated the invitation.

The youthful aspirant who despised all regular studies, and who quarrelled with Lawrence, was not likely to be a successful candidate for the honours of the Royal Academy. Accordingly,

on his offering himself for the rank of Associate, there was but one vote in his favour; and when Fuseli was accused of having bestowed the solitary suffrage, he vindicated himself by saying, "I voted for the talent — not for the man!" In this the Professor of Painting was right: the Academy ought to hold no inquest on the minor morals, — on the propriety of dress, or the courtesies of life; their business is with *art*, and nothing but art. It is true that gross immorality of conduct may render a very clever man unworthy of admission; but no such charge could be brought against Harlow. Mere little eccentricities of character, so frequently allied to the finest genius, are apt enough, however, to be set down as proofs of folly, if not madness, by the cold-hearted and calculating; and he who pursues his object without regard to the opinions and caprices of others, has at all times been likely to be reckoned headstrong, meddling, and presumptuous. This repulse—and a rude one it was — exasperated Harlow against the Academy; and cursing them in his heart, some say with his tongue, he resolved to prove to the world that they had wronged a man of genius.

Harlow had set his heart on some grand revenge; but an angry man cannot always find the opportunity which he seeks; and when he finds it, he may discover that the task is above his strength. It has indeed been said, that there is no escape from

> "The settled hate and vengeance strong
> Of him who treasures up a wrong;"—

and this may be true as to an individual; but who shall contend single-handed with forty? The first works of Harlow were not such as to excite any serious alarm in the minds of the Royal Academy. They were of an historical nature; "Bolingbroke's Entry into London," and the "Quarrel between Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex." The failure of his hopes of fame from these induced him to paint portraits; and as he had considerable facility of hand, skill in drawing, and generally caught the proper peculiarity of character, he soon found many sitters. His first exhibited production was a drawing of his mother. She had lived to see her son become eminent, and died when he was twenty-two years old: he loved her memory, and ever mentioned her name with tenderness. But the work which first caught the public attention was the "Hubert and Prince Arthur," painted for Mr. Leader at the price of one hundred guineas. The force of character, and splendour of colours, had more influence with the public than with the proprietor, who liked this historical effort so little that he had it exchanged for portraits of his daughters. We have no wish to be sarcastic upon the amiable vanity of one who prefers his own children to the heroes of history. Taste which arises from domestic affection deserves to be cherished; and if we may estimate private happiness from the multitude of portraits of the nameless and unknown, our own nation enjoys more fireside tranquillity than any other in the universe. It is probable that Harlow would have refused or resented this singular ex-

change; but poverty, as it parts good company often crushes lofty resolutions,— and so it fared with him. Young, giddy, and thoughtless, he seldom looked farther before him than the present moment; and when he received a sum of money, scattered it readily with both hands, trusting to a fame which he felt to be rising, and a skill of hand which he knew to be growing, to supply the wants of to-morrow. He was, moreover, quite unskilled in the ways of the world: too enthusiastic, and too generous, to measure mankind by a meaner standard than what he gauged himself with, it was not till he had received some severe admonitions, not by precept but example, that he consented to lower the tone of his philosophy. Among his portraits, those of the cynical Northcote and the selfish Nollekens have been much commended. Of the former there is a fine engraving by Lewis: the latter is in the drawing-room of the Duke of St. Albans.

The success of his portraits, and the praise, without patronage, which his historical attempts obtained, probably induced him to try a blending of the two styles in one piece; and, accordingly, he commenced what some call "The Trial of Queen Catherine," and others, "The Kemble Family." The world had seen works enough of this class: the pictures of Reynolds, Romney, and Barry are not likely to be forgotten. I cannot, however, regard such productions as strictly historical: ancient days shake hands with latter; nor can we survey, without a smile, the heads of those with whom we live, and dance, and dine,

placed upon the bodies of princes and courtiers who have passed to their final account two hundred years ago. Thus the Queen Catherine of Harlow's picture, asserting her dignity, and claiming protection of the law before King Henry and his courtiers, is, in spite of costume and quotation from Shakspeare, Mrs. Siddons still. And so much, perhaps, the better in one point of view — for it is more than probable that the injured queen had not the good fortune to possess a countenance so majestically intellectual as that of our great actress. It is, however, the province of the historic painter to employ either the actual heads of the period of his work, or invent heads in keeping with their characters. Harlow meant, probably, nothing more than a copy of the scene as presented on the stage; and took the heads as he found them. Be that as it may, he has made a fine picture. It is to the honour of Welch, the professor of music, that he commissioned it to be painted; and it is to the honour of the artist, that, having enlarged the work, and bestowed much time and skill upon it, he made no additional charge. Such it seems were the powers of his memory, that he required but one sitting of the accomplished actress: he has caught the full vigour of her character in the mass: the detail of lineaments always detracts from the heroic.

Concerning this picture we find the following notice by Knowles, in his Life of Fuseli. "In the year 1817, Fuseli sat, at my request, to Harlow for his portrait; which is on panel, of a cabinet size. This eminent painter was highly gratified by the

compliment, and exerted every faculty to do his best. Fuseli obliged him and me, by giving for this picture twelve sittings of two hours each; and a more perfect resemblance, or characteristic portrait, has seldom been painted. I attended Fuseli at each sitting; and during the progress of this portrait, Harlow commenced and finished his last and most esteemed work, 'The Trial of Queen Catherine,' in which he introduced many portraits, but more particularly those of the Kemble family. In the performance of this work, he owed many obligations to Fuseli for his critical remarks; for when he first saw the picture, chiefly in dead-colouring, he said, 'I do not disapprove of the general arrangement of your work, and I see you will give it a powerful effect of light and shadow: but you have here a composition of more than twenty figures, or, I should rather say, parts of figures, because you have not shown one leg or foot, which makes it very defective. Now, if you do not know how to draw legs and feet, I will show you;' and taking up a crayon, he drew two on the wainscot of the room. Harlow profited by these remarks; and the next time we saw the picture, the whole arrangement in the foreground was changed. Fuseli then said, 'So far you have done well: but now you have not introduced a back figure, to throw the eye of the spectator into the picture;' and then pointed out by what means he might improve it in this particular. Accordingly, Harlow introduced the two boys who are taking up the cushion: that which shows the back is altogether due to Fuseli, and is certainly the best-drawn figure in the picture. Fuseli

afterwards attempted to get him to improve the drawing of the arms of the principal object, Mrs. Siddons, who is represented as Queen Catherine, but without much effect, particularly the left; and after having witnessed many ineffectual attempts of the painter to accomplish this, he desisted; and remarked, 'It is a pity that you never attended the Antique Academy.'"

The arrogant officiousness of Fuseli, and the forbearance of Harlow, in this scene, are alike remarkable: few artists are to be found so mild and meek as to receive with thankfulness remarks sternly and sneeringly made; and if the youthful painter had not been overawed by the dictatorial tone and widely acknowledged authority of the Professor, he would certainly have shown him at once out of his studio. But this was not all: as a specimen of the vanity of Harlow, and the pedagogue petulance of Fuseli, Knowles tells the following story: — 'Harlow proved himself, on many occasions, to be among the vainest of men; and generally wished it to be believed that he possessed information to which he was a stranger. On one occasion he said to me, 'It is extraordinary that Fuseli, who is so fine a scholar, should suffer engravers to place translations under plates taken from the classical subjects painted by him;' and remarked, 'I was educated a scholar, having been at Westminster school, and therefore wish to see the subjects given in the original languages;' and then imprudently instanced the print taken from his picture of the Death of Œdipus. When Fuseli appointed the next sitting, on our way to Har-

low's house I mentioned this conversation to him; and added, 'I really think he does not understand one word of Greek or Latin;' to which he gave his assent, and remarked, 'He has made, I think, an unfortunate choice; for, if I recollect rightly, the Greek passage, as well as my translation of it, is scratched in under the mezzotinto. But, before we part, I will bring his knowledge to the test.' After he had sat the usual time, he asked for a piece of chalk, and wrote in large letters, on the wainscot, the following passage: —

" 'Κτύπησε μὲν ζεὺς χθόνιος, αἱδὲ παρθένοι
ῥίγησαν ὡς ἤκουσαν· ἐς δε γουνάτα
πατρὸς πεσοῦσαι, κλαῖον.' *

After having done so, he said to Harlow, 'Read that;' and finding, by his hesitation, that he did not know a letter, he resumed, 'On our way hither, Knowles told me you had said that I ought not to permit engravers to put translations under the prints taken from me; and that you had instanced the Œdipus. Now, that is the Greek quotation whence the subject is taken, and I find you cannot read a letter of it. Let me give you this advice: — you are, undoubtedly, a good portrait painter; and, I think, in small pictures such as you are painting of me, stand unrivalled. This is sufficient merit; do not then pretend to be that

* " From high Jove thundered. When the Virgins heard
The voice of heaven they shuddered, and fell down,
And with their faces on their father's knees,
Lift up their voice and wept."
SOPHOCLES, Œdip. in Col.

which you are not, and probably from your avocations never can be, — a scholar.'" If Harlow, in the vanity of his heart, desired to impress on Knowles an idea of his scholarship, surely, the man was much more than properly punished by the ireful interrogations and insulting advice of Fuseli. But it was not in the character of the latter to be otherwise than overbearing, except at unlooked-for times, when he put on an aspect of mildness, and softened his voice into mercy, that he might make men stare.

Harlow was now in his thirty-first year; and though the harmless vanity of wishing to be thought a scholar might still cling to him, other vanities had been subdued or dismissed. He had sobered down the Parisian folly of his dress into that of an English gentleman: he had conquered his inclination to be rude and indelicate when wine was on the table; and those who formerly lamented that they had invited a dissolute and regardless man to their boards now gladly gave him an opportunity of practising before their wives and daughters the new-taught proprieties and courtesies of life. It is said, that he had affected a sort of swagger in his gait, and unlicensed audacity in speech, from a belief that they became him, and that it was proper to mark out a man of genius from the well-dressed crowds who parade our streets and fill all public places. Those acquainted with human character may, however, have remarked, that much of this parade of singularity proceeds from a desire to be distinguished for *something*. The man who courts notoriety through eccentric conduct and unusual costume,

will gradually relinquish both as he rises in real fame; and when reputation is acquired, it is a thousand to one if he is to be known by his manners or his dress from any other person of like station. It was considered as a proof of Harlow's determination to persevere in his reformation, that he resolved to go to Rome and study,—where all are counselled to study, — in the Vatican.

In the month of June, 1818, Harlow left England for Italy. The object of his journey was chiefly to acquire the art of drawing the human figure with purity and precision; an art in which the English never excelled, and which perhaps too few of us appreciate. It is, indeed, plausibly urged, that as our national modesty refuses to endure the sight of naked beauty, there is no use to learn to produce what no one can find a market for. But those who argue so should consider, that an ill-made person can never wear clothes gracefully; and that a mis-shapen body will show its deformity through the most voluminous draperies. See to how many shifts of grouping, and dressing, and colouring, Reynolds was driven, that he might hide his want of knowledge in the drawing of the human form. And when one so eminent in the proprieties of art can scarcely be said to have more than succeeded, what must become of those who have not the half of his mastery? Of Harlow's improvement in drawing, the full size transcript which he made—and that with unexampled rapidity—of the Transfiguration, will sufficiently testify. Canova was so much pleased with the beauty of the copy, that he said, "This, sir, seems rather the work of eighteen weeks, than

of eighteen days." Nor did he stop there: he introduced the English artist to the Pope, and made him a member of the Academy of St. Luke, —an honour sparingly conferred on British painters.

The best account which I have been able to find of the studies and feelings of Harlow during his stay at Rome is contained in a letter to Mr. Tomkinson, of Dean Street, Soho, London, dated 23d November, 1818, from "4. Piazza Rosa, Secondo Piano in casa di Poliodori."—"The chief part of my labours are now at an end. Having, since my arrival, made an entire copy of the Transfiguration, the next was a composition of my own, of fifteen figures, which created no small sensation here. Canova requested to have the picture at his house for a few days, which was accordingly sent, and on the 10th of November upwards of five hundred persons saw it: it was then removed to the Academy of St. Luke's, and publicly exhibited. They unanimously elected me an academician, and I have received the diploma. There are many things which have made this election very honourable to me. You must understand that there are two degrees in our Academy — one of merit, the other of honour; mine is of merit, being one of the body of the Academy. West, Fuseli, Lawrence, and myself, are the only British artists belonging to St. Luke's as academicians. Raphael, the Carraccis, Poussin, Guido, Titian, and every great master whom we esteem, were members. I had the gratification to see my name enrolled in the list of those illustrious characters. As this fortunate affair

has taken place, I should wish it added to the print of Queen Catherine's Trial, and worded thus—'Member of the Academy of St. Luke's, at Rome.' I wish this, as it is a grand plate;—indeed, it ought to be added. I expect to be in England by Christmas-day, or near it. I was much pleased with Naples; stayed ten days; went to Portici, Herculaneum, and Pompeii, and ascended Mount Vesuvius. This was a spectacle the most awful and grand that I had ever witnessed. The fire bursting every two minutes, with a noise like thunder; red-hot ashes came down continually where I stood sketching, many of which I brought away. The eruption took place a week or two after I had left. Pompeii exhibits the most extraordinary remains of antiquity in the world: a whole city laid open to view; the habitations are unroofed, but in other respects quite perfect. The house of Sallust, the Roman historian, was particularly gratifying to me; it was unaltered in every respect, except the furniture, the same as it was eighteen hundred and fifty years ago, when inhabited by him. Rome has been the scene of great gaiety lately. I was at three splendid balls given at the different palaces; we were obliged to appear in court dresses, and the cardinals added much to the richness and grandeur of the party. I am to be presented to the Pope; Cardinal Gonsalvi will let me know when the day is fixed. I leave Rome directly after: I have become so attached to the place and the people, that I expect a great struggle with myself. I should be the most ungrateful of human beings, if I did not acknowledge the endless favours they have be-

stowed on me. It is the place of all others for an artist, as he is sure to be highly appreciated, if he has any talent. I shall speak of the country to the end of my days with the most fervent admiration."

The end of poor Harlow's days was not so remote as he imagined, when he finished that letter. Having given a picture of "The Presentation of the Cardinal's Hat to Wolsey in Wesminster Abbey" to the Academy of St. Luke's at Rome, and having left a portrait of himself with the Academy of Florence, in return for being made a member, he embarked for his native country, and arrived in London in January, 1819. Lord Burghersh, our ambassador at the court of Florence, had paid him many attentions abroad, equally kind and polite; and Lord Liverpool, who ought to be praised as often as he is named, caused all his packages to be passed at the custom-house without charge or examination. He had, however, hardly re-established himself again in his house, 83. Dean Street, Soho, and set his easel ready, to show to the world how largely he was a profiter by his visit to Italy, when he was suddenly attacked by a disease, called by the learned the Cynanche parotidæa, and by the vulgar the mumps; which, after several days of the severest suffering, terminated his life, on the 4th of February, 1819, in the thirty-second year of his age. He was buried under the altar of St. James's church, Piccadilly—Sir William Beechey, Henry Bone, the celebrated enamelist, and other artists and friends, being present.

Of the person and peculiarities of Harlow

I have already said, perhaps, enough. It has been well observed by one of his biographers, "Let a young man of genius, when he begins the world, be as faultless as an angel, he will find it impossible to escape censure: he should, therefore, avoid all peculiarities of private manners, if he can. Every young painter should read what we now write, and remember it; if he be morbidly inclined, he will find attempts made to goad him into despondency; if irritable, to irritate him into anger; if amiable, to heap calumny and falsehood upon his gentle nature, to lower him to the level of some impotent imitator, to negative his reputation, and sink him in spirit and in health." There is no question, that the free manners and unbridled tongue of Harlow were sorely against his rise here; and that he owed his rejection by the Royal Academy less to his want of influence, than to his conduct and conversation. It cannot be denied, nevertheless, that, except in a certain want of decorum, he was in his worst days no worse than many other artists, and better, as far as a generous nature goes, than many who prevented his admission to honours which his pencil richly deserved. As an artist, he was eminently skilful in colour and in human character, and handled his subjects with unusual taste and grace: but he discovered, after all, no new way of awakening our emotions; he followed the beaten track in which others trode, and perhaps his highest fame is that of having had some of his heads mistaken for the work of Lawrence. Painters acquainted with the minutiæ of drawing, the trick

of light and shade, and all the often-practised spells which go to make up a picture, might, it is possible, discover some traits of difference between Harlow and his brethren, which, to a professional eye, might seem important. I have looked for such things in vain, and described his works as they appear to me; and shall conclude with the generous words of Lawrence, "that he was the most promising of all our painters."

BONINGTON.

It is often the pleasure of the Creator to unite a fine genius with a frail body: the former ripens into excellence, and the latter fades and decays; and both sink prematurely together, for in death they may not be divided. Of these, one of the latest and worthiest was Richard Parkes Bonington. He was born in the village of Arnold, near Nottingham, on the 25th of October, 1801. For one whose life was to be brief, his parentage was fortunate: his father, a follower of art in his youth for amusement, resorted to it in manhood for subsistence, painted landscapes and portraits, and likewise taught drawing in some of the public schools around Nottingham. Bonington was therefore born and nursed in the bosom of art; and we are told that when only three years old he sketched almost every object that presented itself to his observation: this might be; but making all allowance for his advantages, one can scarcely be prepared to credit the story which adds, that even at that infantine period he not unfrequently ventured to make designs. When fame finds a man of genius out, and the world begins to take some interest in him,—if he

is a poet, his accidental jingles in the nursery are called to memory as proofs of early inspiration; and if a painter, his hideous and unmeaning scrawlings with ink or with cinders are set down as designs and sketches requiring thoughts stronger than what childhood has to bestow. I find it gravely asserted, that "some specimens of these precocious efforts are still in the possession of his parents: they are chiefly drawn in pen and ink, with surprising accuracy, and illustrative of history;" but that a child three years old should illustrate the history which he could not read, appears to me, I must own, a story that would require the faith of a Hohenlohite.

Though not such a miracle as this, it is nevertheless true that he drew and sketched with considerable accuracy, and even taste, when but some seven or eight years old; and this is wonderful enough in all conscience. We must, however, consider, that his father directed his studies, and made him familiar from his cradle with works of art, and guided his hand in sketching. He perceived, indeed, a wonderful aptitude in the boy; with a father's love he watched over his progress, and with an artist's skill showed him the true and immediate way. He supplied him not only with those ready subjects for exercise which the print-book and portfolios contain, but conducted him into the fields, and bade him study the pasture hills, the ruined towers, the running streams, the busy birds, the unfolding flowers, the light and shade of the forest, and in all, and in more, find matter for his pencil. From books and prints the student gets but a

very little of what nature has to tell him; what he sees there is fixed and unchanging: but the face of nature is as changeable as a cloud; the tree each day wears a new look; the hill and dale alter their livery; the flower puts out a fresh blossom, opening more and more in the sun; the light-and-shade of the woods, as the winds arise, or the day brightens or darkens, flits and varies; and the bird's nest begun but a week ago is become to-day a mansion of singular masonry, with four speckled eggs and an anxious dam. The student who desires true knowledge must go forth with his sketch-book, like Bonington, and, considering nature as his academy, take sittings at all seasons and under all influences. Her loveliness and varieties are not to be learned elsewhere than in her lap. He will know little of birds who studies them stuffed in the museum, and less of the rose and the lily who never saw any thing but artificial nosegays.

During these early days the general education of Bonington was not neglected. He madę such progress in learning as enabled him to acquit himself as a gentleman when the use of his pen was called for; he could not, however, lay claim to the rank of a scholar. Indeed, to any thing like scholarship, few of our artists have any pretension: subdivision of labour, so much admired in this age of extravagance and economists, limits men's views too exclusively to the immediate pursuit which brings bread or fame; and as art, unlike "the learned professions," holds out no allurements to those born in the circles of wealth and worldly honour, the Royal Academy has to recruit

its ranks from those whom the impulse of nature may chance to call from the workshop or the plough to hold the pencil or the chisel. The learning of Fuseli — of which he always made the most — was the terror for many years of his less accomplished brethren: on the strength of attainments which would have been accounted moderate enough any where else save amongst artists, he ruled with all the insolence of a Swiss, a Greek, and a Grammarian; he who could quote Pindar in the original had no chance of being contradicted by any one in authority during the presidencies of either Reynolds, West, or Lawrence.*

Nottingham stands far inland, and amidst scenes made interesting by the adventures of Robin Hood. But of Robin and his chivalrous outlaws, and their haunts in the "deep greenwood," Bonington appears never to have been enamoured: a love of scenery of another kind than what his native place offered came upon him in his thirteenth or fourteenth year. Living far from the coast, and knowing the sea from rumour alone or from paintings, he became immoderately attached to scenes in which land and water meet; and before he ever saw the ocean, his pencil had imagined it agitated by the storm, when the spray, in the words of the old poet,

"Upswept by angry gusts, fills all the air."

Nor did he love it less when the storm had ceased, the undulation had subsided, and the

* I suspect there is bitter truth in an observation of Mr. Lockhart's in the Quarterly Review,—"Quote Lycophron, and Homer will be taken for granted."

sea-fowl and sunshine were sporting together in the bay. Our best landscapes are of mingled land and sea; and our finest scenery is to be found on the coast. When, in after-life, Bonington had an opportunity of comparing his conceptions with the truth of actual nature, he found that he had seized the grand and leading features, but had missed those subordinate charms which lend such allurements to landscape. It was wonderful, indeed, that one living so far inland should become fond of maritime scenery, which he could only peruse in descriptions or paintings: it must be considered, however, as a sort of providential direction of his mind; the sight of the works which awakened it fell like a spark of gunpowder, and called him up in his best and truest spirit. His finest productions are chiefly of this nature, and show at once poetic feeling and power of hand. He refuses to take nature rough, rugged, and raw, as he finds her; he softens down her asperities, raises a little her common-place expression, and gives a lustre to the air, a loveliness to the earth, and an interest to "the untillable and barren deep," which are only to be found in fortunate moments.

One of the obstacles which genius has not seldom to surmount is the opposition of relatives and friends: it is pleasing to give advice, since it implies superiority; and it is wonderful with what self-complacency a dull old man will lecture a fiery youth on plans of study and habits of thought, in which he himself could never have shared. It was otherwise with Bonington: he was instructed by his father, and encouraged by

his mother; for both believed that he would surely live to honour them by rising to eminence in art. When fifteen years old, such was his skill of hand, and such his readiness of conception, that his father resolved to give him the advantage of other instruction than his own; and accordingly carried him to Paris, and applied for leave to study in the Louvre. This was readily granted to a youth who carried with him such proofs of capacity; and the keepers of that fine national collection are represented as wondering at the skill with which the English boy transferred to his own paper or canvass some of the fairest landscapes of the Italian and Flemish schools. I cannot help regretting, however, that Bonington was carried out of his native land before his mind as well as body had grown to man's estate. Had he studied at home, he would have grown up more vigorous, more original, more British, than he did; and would have sought and found, in home scenes and home history, subjects worthy of his deepest study and richest colours.

I mean not, however, to accuse him of servility of imitation; nay, the French themselves, who, indeed, admire him as much at least as we do, acquit him of this. "The scenes," writes his foreign biographer, "which he designed without any principles, indicated great intelligence; he imitated, but with ease and spirit. He was but barely sixteen years old when we saw him first, and had not acquired the mastery of the science on which all beauty in art depends. As soon as he acquired the power of expressing his conceptions, his brilliant works became the

wonder of the school. His companions saw that he would not follow servilely any system, though recommended by a professor; and that he was not born to copy others, but create for himself. The chief of the school was obliged to reproach him for inattention to the precepts which he delivered on picturesque painting; and from the obstinacy of his genius it was soon evident, that he would walk in his own paths alone, at whatever risk. His spirit was independent, and despised routines. He escaped from that by removing from the school, where the task assigned to genius is the art of putting a figure together, and where the rudiments of old compositions are sacred. He left the academy as soon as he had studied the living model, and could draw it correctly." From the French school he did not escape without a taint: on a mind so tender as his the precepts and examples, which he would not follow, had, nevertheless, some influence; and France, Italy, and England have all contributed to that kind of composite style in which his chief paintings are executed. In forming a style out of the works of many nations, in the hope of creating

"That faultless monster which the world ne'er saw,"

an artist is apt to lose in original vigour what he gains in elegance; and, desiring to produce works adapted to the taste of all the world, may chance to miss the felicity of being thoroughly and completely fascinating to any one nation.

The praise which the Parisians bestowed, and the money which Bonington made by the rapid

sale of his works, whether originals or copies, encouraged him to remain longer than had been at first contemplated. He mixed much with the artists of Paris; became, without much profit, a student of the Institute, and drew sometimes in the *atelier* of M. le Baron Gros. But his chief pleasure was in making drawings of sea-coast and river-side scenery: to blend land with water, and both with cloud and sky, was a favourite theme; the motion of the sea, the moving of ships, and, more than all, the laborious and picturesque toils of the fisherman. To these he added fish-markets: nor did he throw an atmosphere of Billingsgate over such homely scenes; he considered them rather as places of repose and contemplation, than of vulgar bustle and noisy chaffering; and though a fish is nowhere so beauteous as when swimming in its clear native stream, the pencil of Bonington gave them all the beauty which the market stall will allow. On his canvass

> "The stately salmon sail,
> The trouts bedropp'd with crimson hail,
> And eels weel kenn'd for nimble tail,
> And geds for greed;"

and he portrayed with equal clearness the characters of the motley buyers and sellers who thronged the market. His favourite study seemed to be the drawing of the net, and the laying of the fish on the pure sands, on the line of shells and pebbles which marks the limits of the tide, or on the greensward bank. The old looked on them with an eye calculating their value; the

young, with wonder at their shining scales and changing colours. So much were his merits felt in Paris, that the moment a drawing of any scene was exhibited, purchasers came and contended for it. His second drawing, a marine subject, obtained him a gold medal, at the same time that similar distinctions were awarded to Constable and Fielding, and Sir Thomas Lawrence was enrolled a member of the Legion of Honour.

Having acquired fame and money in Paris, he resolved to travel into Italy; and of all the cities of that rich region Venice was the favourite of his pencil; and well might it be so, since he found for streets, canals, — for coaches, boats, — while no such thing as the sound of wheels was to be heard. "It is more like a city about to go to sea," he observed, "than like a town built on dry land and attached to the earth." Here he was at home, and set up his easel, resolved to take some sittings from the queen of the Adriatic. These were chiefly studies on a small scale, taken like a speech in short-hand, to be expanded into proper dimensions, and clothed with all the attractions of colour, at the first favourable opportunity: some were, however, done in oils; one of these was the Ducal Palace, and another the Grand Canal, — works which alone would suffice to give this artist high rank amongst the landscape painters of Britain. When the first of them was exhibited in the British Gallery, a critic and connoisseur came up to me in a sort of ecstasy and said, — "Come this way, sir, and I will show you such a thing — a grand Canaletti sort of picture, sir, as beautiful as sunshine and

as real as Whitehall." To this new marvel I was accordingly led. There was a reality about it, which left no doubt of its excellence as a likeness; but I must own I fancied it rather too literal, too much like the production of a sworn surveyor, to claim a very high place amongst works of genius. The painting of the Grand Canal is a nobler work, equalling the same scene by Canaletti in truth, and surpassing it far in poetic effect. It is, indeed, but two rows of houses, as I heard a critic sneeringly say; but then the houses of Venice are not like the brick-stack structures of London—they are of a splendid and picturesque architecture; and the deep water which supplies the place of pavement, carries on its bosom a freight of gondolas busied in pleasure or in commerce, and gives a new species of enchantment to a scene otherwise eminently beautiful. Had Byron seen this painting, he could not have concealed his rapture, for it comes up to his notion of works of art. "I know nothing," says the poet in one of his letters to Mr. Murray, "of painting, and I detest it, unless it reminds me of something I have seen or think it possible to see; for which reason I spit upon and abhor all the saints and subjects of one half the compositions I see in the churches and palaces. Of all the arts, it is the most artificial and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is most imposed upon. I never saw the picture, or statue, which came within a league of my conception or expectation; but I have seen many mountains, and seas, and rivers, and views, and two or three

women, who went far beyond it — besides some horses."

Bonington was more than a mere landscape painter. He included within his scene whatever naturally and properly belonged to it: on the sea-side he had fishermen; on the sea itself ships under sail, with all their mariners — pinnaces and barges, with freights of beauty: ashore, he gave to the garden, ladies playing on the lute, or listening to the song of the bird or of the lover; he peopled his walks and groves with life, and showed no common skill and taste in his groups and figures. In this he resembled Gainsborough, whose peasants are not the least pleasing part of his landscapes. Nor did Bonington desire to depict merely an acre or two of nature, and trust to the literal reality of his scene for success: he knew that nature presents much to the eye on which art has no colours to squander; he therefore singled out scenes which, either from extreme loveliness, from picturesque effect, or old association, he knew would please, and these he handled with singular ease and delicacy. It cannot be denied, however, that most of his Italian pictures are tinctured with his feeling for some of the great masters of the pencil. Instead of being contented with looking at what lay before himself, his desire was to borrow the eyes of Canaletti, or some other favourite of days gone by. All this gratified the connoisseur, but not those who judged from nature; to look like Canaletti with the former was a grace, with the latter a deformity. There is a painful

precision about Canaletti — a disagreeable slavishness of fidelity, resembling that of the painter who drenched his field of battle in blood, for the purpose of proving how heroic the contest had been. Bonington had not the half of this minute precision, and yet he had too much; but his brilliant and poetical colouring threw a lustre over these mechanical over-accuracies.

He tried all the styles of painting below the historical, and attained eminence in them all: moreover, he tried all the methods of the various schools; and it was one of his "imaginations" to combine the fidelity of the Dutch, the vigour of the Venetians, the science of the Romans, and the *sense* of the English, all in one grand performance. This wild scheme, which even the poetic and fervent Fuseli had considered impracticable, was looked upon by Bonington as a matter of no great difficulty; his French biographer regrets that he did not live to put such a plan into execution; and mentions, that he had selected a series of subjects from the history of the middle ages, on which to make the experiment. His "Henry the Third of France" may be considered as a specimen of what he aimed at. That piece showed at once great knowledge of colour, skill in composition, and attention to costume, — all wonderful in an artist so young; — yet it failed to make any impression on the committee of Academicians who arranged the pictures in our English Exhibition. They placed it close to the floor; and as position, with them, implies their estimation of merit, this fine painting suffered under the twofold disadvantage of

a bad light and the implied disapprobation of the Royal Academy. Yet thousands stooped to look at it; and many went away wondering why a work, which deserved a conspicuous place, should be put where none could see it fairly. The newspapers, I ought to add, noticed and reproved this conduct in the Royal Academy. Besides works of the nature I have described, it was his intention to paint a series of pictures similar to that of the Grand Canal of Venice. His mind teemed with extensive projects; and, as his conception was quick, and his execution rapid, much was looked for from his hand.

I know not whether Bonington was at all aware in these days that a visible decay had come upon him, and that in the regretful opinion of many he was a man marked out for an early grave: whatever he might feel or surmise, he said nothing, but continued to employ his pencil with all the ardour of the most flourishing health. He rose early and studied late; nor did he allow any piece to go hastily from his hand. The French, who are quick in discerning and generous in acknowledging merit, not only applauded his works from the outset, but watched his progress and improvement, and eagerly compared the marine paintings of the young Englishman with the standard works of the artists of their own country. M. Gros, who, it seems, had for some unrecorded reason closed his *atelier* against him, was so touched by his fine works, that he ere long recalled him with commendations; and, in the presence of his pupils, said, he considered it an honour to have him

in his studio. A more moderate style of rapture was to be expected from his own countrymen; nevertheless, cold as English approbation of talent may seem, his works were welcomed here as few works of art have been welcomed. His extreme modesty was somewhat against his success: he was fearful of being thought presuming and forward; and has been known to shrink from introductions to men of rank and talent, from a doubt of his own deservings. A letter to me from Mrs. Forster, a lady distinguished by her own talent as well as from being the daughter of Banks the sculptor, contains the following passage:—"When Bonington visited England, in 1827, I gave him a letter of introduction to Sir Thomas Lawrence, but he returned to Paris without having delivered it. On my enquiring why he had not waited on the President, he replied,—'I don't think myself worthy of being introduced to him yet, but after another year of hard study I may be more deserving of the honour.' The following spring he went to London with his pictures; those which brought him such well merited fame. He carried a letter from me to Sir Thomas, which he presented, and was received into his friendship: but, alas! it was of short duration; for the great success of his works, the almost numberless orders which he received for pictures and drawings, together with unremitting study, brought on a brain fever, from which he recovered only to sink in a rapid decline." All other accounts concur with that of Mrs. Forster, in attributing his illness to the accumulation of pressing commissions: he viewed

the amount with nervous dismay; he became deeply affected; his appetite failed; his looks denoted anguish of body and mind; a quick and overmastering consumption left him strength scarcely sufficient to bring him to London, where he arrived about the middle of September, 1828. The conclusion of his career was thus related to Mrs. Forster by Sir Thomas Lawrence:—"Your sad presage has been too fatally verified; the last duties have just been paid to the lamented Mr. Bonington. Except in the case of Mr. Harlow, I have never known, in my own time, the early death of talent so promising, and so rapidly and obviously improving. If I may judge from the later direction of his studies, and from remembrance of a morning's conversation, his mind seemed expanding in every way, and ripening into full maturity of taste and elevated judgment, with that generous ambition which makes confinement to lesser departments in the art painfully irksome and annoying.

"'But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.'"

Having not quite finished his 27th year, he died calmly on the 23d of September, 1828, and was interred in the vault of St. James's Church, Pentonville, in the presence of Lawrence, and Howard, and Robson, and the Rev. J. T. Judkin, —himself a skilful painter—an ardent admirer and steadfast friend.

Bonington was tall, well, and even to appearance, strongly formed. "His countenance," says the French biographer, "was truly English; and

we loved him for his melancholy air, which became him more than smiles." The memory of his person will soon wear away; but it will fare otherwise with his fame. He lived long enough to assert his title to a high place amongst English landscape painters, and had produced works which bid fair to be ranked permanently with the foremost. They are not numerous, but for that very reason they will, perhaps, be the more prized. A series of engravings amounting to some four and twenty, has been published by Carpenter, from pictures of this artist, some in his own possession, some in the galleries of the Marquess of Lansdown, the Duke of Bedford, and other patrons of art, The best of these are the landscapes; and of the landscapes, the worthiest are of mingled sea and land — pieces distinguished by great picturesque beauty, and singular grace of execution. His practice was to sketch in the outline and general character, and then make accurate studies of the local light-and-shade, and colour. His handling was delicate and true, and his colouring clear and harmonious. It cannot, however, be denied, that he wants vigour and breadth; that his more poetic scenes are too light and slim; and his express copies from nature too literal and real. He was a softer sort of Gainsborough, with more than his grace, and with not a little of his taste for scattering happy and characteristic groups among landscape scenes — but, it must be added, with only a far-off approach to the *strength* of that great master. That, had his life been prolonged, he would have risen to very high distinction, cannot be doubted. It was his generous dream,

we are told, to acquire a competency by painting commissions, and then dedicate his time and pencil to historical compositions, — a dream which many artists have dreamed; but his works have little of the epic in them. Nature gave him good advice, when she directed his steps to the surf-beat shore, and bade him paint the swelling tide, the busy boats, fishermen drying their nets, and the sea-eagle looking from the rock upon his wide and, to him, fruitful dominion.

END OF VOL. V.

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